

Farington Parish Council

Minutes of the remote Parish Council Meeting held on Monday 8 February 2021 at 7.00 pm.

Present:- Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman (Chairman); Councillor Michael Green (Vice-Chairman); Councillor Paul Buckley; Councillor Mike Otter; Councillor Elaine Robb; Councillor Chris Wharton-Hardman and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton.

In attendance:- Sue Whittam - Clerk to the Council
David Williams – South Ribble Borough Council
3 members of the public.

34. (20/21) Sound Check, Muting, Voting and Chairman's welcome to attendees

The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman welcomed everyone to this month's remote Parish Council meeting. The Chairman also confirmed that he had received a request for an Item of Urgent Business from Councillor Michael Green. The item was related to the provision of computer tablets to local schools. The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman agreed that this could not await the next meeting of the Parish Council and that the Parish Council should consider this item. This was unanimously agreed.

35. (20/21) Apologies for Absence

None.

36. (20/21) Declarations of interest

Councillor Michael Green declared a personal and prejudicial in item 7 – Parish Council vacancy as one of the applicants was related to him.

Councillor Michael Green, Councillor Mrs Karen Walton and the Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman declared a prejudicial interest in Item 10 – South Ribble Borough Council Budget Consultation, as they were all Elected Members of South Ribble Borough Council.

Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Michael Otter declared a prejudicial interest in item 11 in relation to St Paul's Park and in particular the grant application to the Farington Fund, as they were members of the panel on the fund.

37. (20/21) Minutes of the Last Meeting

Resolved

That the Minutes of the Annual Parish Council Meeting held on 14 December 2020 are an accurate record and it was agreed that these would be signed at the next face to face meeting in accordance with LGA 1972 Sch. 12 Part VI para 41 (1).

38. (20/21) Adjournment for Public Participation

The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman adjourned the meeting for public participation and welcomed the members of the public to the meeting. He asked if anyone had anything to raise under this item.

David Williams from South Ribble Borough Council gave an update to the Parish Council on projects being undertaken by the Borough Council that affected the Farington Parish area. In particular he explained that he was working with Jo Beaman from South Ribble Borough Council and Withnell Anglers to look at making improvements to the dipping platforms, and that he was currently seeking funding for this project. Councillor Mrs Karen Walton explained that she was also involved in this project which also included improvements to the entrance and car parking.

Councillor Elaine Robb asked about the gate that had now been missing for a while and should be treated as urgent as it was dangerous not to have a gate in place. Councillor Mrs Karen Walton said that this should be funded from a maintenance budget and not be included as part of any project. As the land was owned by South Ribble Borough Council, Councillor Mrs Karen Walton said she would speak to Andrew Richardson at South Ribble Borough Council to see if the gate could be replaced urgently.

David Williams also confirmed that South Ribble in Bloom was continuing and there would be additional categories such as the most tomatoes on a bunch and best sunflower and hanging basket. Councillor Mrs Karen Walton said that as the Farington and Lostock Hall in Bloom was not now continuing, the shields purchased by Farington Parish Council should be returned to the Parish and the Parish Council would decide if they wished to have their own in Bloom competition.

The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman thanked David for attending the meeting. He then asked if any member of the public had any issues to raise with the Parish Council. One member of the public explained that further information was still awaited from the Planning Inspectorate regarding the Chain House Lane appeal which was due to start on 16 March. The hearing would be held remotely.

The member of the public also raised an issue regarding a hedge that needed cutting and the land/hedge was owned by Homes England. Councillor Mrs Karen Walton asked the member of the public to email her the details and she would deal with this issue.

The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman thanked the member of the public for attending the meeting.

Councillor Elaine Robb raised her disappointment regarding the precept requested from South Ribble Borough Council. The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman explained that the Minutes made it clear that it was a named vote and everything had been recorded accurately.

There were no further issues to be raised under this item and therefore the Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman reconvened the meeting.

39. (20/21) Planning Issues

Councillor Mrs Karen Walton informed the Parish Council that she was having a number of issues with mud on the highway relating to the Kier Development site at Croston Road, Farington Moss. It was agreed that the Parish Council would contact the Planning Officer for the development and asks that the conditions granted with the planning permission are adhered to in particular relating to wheel washing and the prevention of depositing mud on the highway.

Resolved

That, with regard to the Kier Development site at Croston Road, Farington Moss that the Clerk contacts the Planning Officer for the development asks that the conditions granted with the planning permission are adhered to in particular relating to wheel washing and the prevention of depositing mud on the highway.

40. (20/21) Parish Council Vacancy

(Councillor Michael Green declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item and took no part in the discussion or the decision).

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council had received two applications for the Parish Council vacancy by the closing date of 1 February 2021, and that the information received from both applicants had been circulated in advance to the Parish Councillors. Each applicant had been sent the agenda and link for this evening's meeting and had been asked to speak for up to three minutes. There would then be the opportunity for each applicant to ask questions and also for members of the Parish Council to ask questions. The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman welcomed Mr Tony Green to the meeting who was one of the applicants. It was noted that the other applicant was not present at the meeting and the Clerk contacted the applicant by telephone to see if she would be attending. However, at the time of contacting her there was no reply, so the Clerk left a message. The Parish Council agreed to proceed with the filing of the vacancy.

Mr Tony Green addressed the Parish Council and provided information on his interests and background including why he wished to become a member of Farington Parish Council. The Clerk then conducted a poll by secret ballot and those present who were not Parish Councillors were placed remotely into the "waiting room" while the secret ballot took place. The Clerk informed the Chairman of the results of the secret ballot and then readmitted Councillor Michael Green, members of the public and Tony Green to the meeting. The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman congratulated Tony Green on his co-option to Farington Parish Council and the Clerk confirmed that she would forward the relevant paperwork to Councillor Tony Green for his completion.

Resolved

That Tony Green is appointed as a co-opted member of Farington Parish Council with immediate effect.

41. (20/21) Item of Urgent Business – Computer Tablets for Schools

With the agreement of the Chairman and all present, it was agreed that this item would be considered as an item of Urgent Business as it could not await the next meeting of the Parish Council. Councillor Michael Green had brought this item to the Parish Council as he was concerned that due to the covid crisis that children did not have access to appropriate technology to enable them to undertake home schooling. Although the Government had implemented a scheme nationally, Councillor Michael Green felt it was important for the Parish Council to contribute where possible and help our local school children. It was noted that Lancashire County Council had recently promoted a similar scheme across Lancashire and that South Ribble Borough Council had also implemented a scheme but this had been restricted to a small number of Wards within the Borough. The Clerk confirmed that the way to manage the scheme would be to ask each school for the number of tablets required and once ordered by the relevant schools, the Parish Council would pay the invoices. Councillor Michael Green was proposing that the Parish Council contributed £4,000 to purchase suitable tablets such as a Lenovo Tab M10 which costed around £130-£150 each. He suggested that these should be targeted at years 3-6 years. In addition to this it was felt that any schools approached should have already applied to the Government scheme in the first instance. This was seconded by Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman and unanimously agreed.

The Parish Council then discussed which schools should be approached. Councillor Mrs Karen Walton felt that other schools should also be given the opportunity especially as a number of children who lived in Farington attended schools outside the Parish area. This was also supported by Councillor Michael Green. However, it was noted that there was only a limited amount of funding available. It was proposed by Councillor Elaine Robb that in the first instance the offer should be limited to the two primary schools in the Parish area, namely St Paul's CE Primary School and Farington Primary School. The offer would be limited to those children in years 3-6 and lived in the Parish Council area. This would be on the proviso that the school had already applied to the Government scheme. This was seconded by the Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman. On being put to the vote, four members voted in favour of the proposal and four members voted against the proposal and therefore the Chairman had the casting vote. The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman supported the proposal and it was therefore agreed. In addition to this, it was proposed by the Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman that in the event that the two local primary schools did not use the full allocation of funding then it should be delegated to the Clerk to contact other primary schools within one mile of the Parish boundary. This was seconded by Councillor Michael Green. On being put to the vote six members voted for the proposal and one member voted against. This proposal was agreed.

Resolved

i) That, approval is given to the allocation of £4,000 to purchase suitable tablets such as a Lenovo Tab M10 for local primary schools and in particular years 3-6.

ii) That, in the first instance the two local primary schools in the Parish Council area namely St Paul's CE Primary School and Farington Primary School, should be contacted and offered funding for suitable tablets referred to in i) above. The offer would be limited to those children in years 3-6 and lived in the Parish Council area. This would be on the proviso that the school had already applied to the Government scheme.

iii) That, in the event that the two local primary schools do not use up the allocation of £4,000, approval is given to the Clerk to approach other primary schools within a one-mile boundary of the Parish Council area, the same criteria would apply as stated in ii) above.

42. (20/21) Financial Risk Assessment

The Parish Council reviewed the Financial Risk Assessment and it was noted that there were no recommended changes to the Risk Assessment for this year. The Parish Council approved the Financial Risk Assessment and a copy is presented in the Minute Book.

Resolved

That approval is given to the Financial Risk Assessment and a copy is presented in the Minute Book.

43. (20/21) Financial Rules and Regulations

The Parish Council reviewed the Financial Rules and Regulations. The Clerk had advised that there should be one amendment to the current Financial Rules and Regulations to include an additional paragraph 6.6 to take into account the Clerk's agreed pay scale as detailed below: -

6.6 The Clerk shall be paid on the 1st of each month. The salary for the current Clerk is Spinal Column Point 28 in line with NALC/NJC pay scales. This shall be adjusted annually to reflect any changes in the pay scales. Any replacement Clerk will be paid in line with their skills and experience.

This was unanimously agreed by the Parish Council and a copy of the updated Financial Rules and Regulations are presented in the Minute Book.

Resolved

That approval is to the amended Financial Rules and Regulations and a copy is presented in the Minute Book.

44. (20/21) South Ribble Borough Council – budget consultation

(The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman, Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton declared a prejudicial interest in this item and left the meeting for the discussion and the decision).

The Parish Council gave consideration to the budget consultation by South Ribble Borough Council. It was noted that the Borough Council did not consult on their proposals last year, so their consultation was welcomed by the Parish Council. The

Parish Council did not have comments to make on the budget proposals but it was noted that individual Parish Councillors could comment on the consultation if they wished to do so.

Resolved

That the Parish Council have no comments to make on the South Ribble Borough Council budget consultation but individual Parish Councillors could comment on the consultation if they wished to do so.

(The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman, Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton returned to the meeting).

45. (20/21) Projects for expenditure 2021/2022

The following projects were discussed: -

St Paul's Park - (Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mike Otter declared a prejudicial interest in this item and in particular relating to a grant application to the Farington Fund as members of the decision panel. They both left the meeting and took no part in the discussion or decision).

The Clerk reported that she had now received three quotes for the refurbishment of the playground and she was currently working with South Ribble Borough Council to see how this could be taken forward. The Parish Council agreed to apply to the Farington Fund for help with this project and agreed to apply for £40,000.

Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mike Otter returned to the meeting.

Parish Council Newsletter – It was agreed that Councillor Paul Buckley, Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton would produce the newsletter and would forward a draft newsletter to the Clerk by 26 February for circulation to the Parish Council for comments/approval. It had been previously agreed that any newsletter would be delivered by a delivery company and the cost of this would also be provided with the draft newsletter to the Clerk for circulation to the Parish Council.

Parish Council Website – The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton Hardman suggested that the Parish Council website could do with a total refresh and he had been looking at different providers and website builders. He explained that most of these had a one-off annual cost to set up and then a yearly cost to load information onto the website. He also suggested that the Parish Council should consider having a Farington.gov domain site. The Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman agreed to send the information to the Clerk so this could be circulated to the Parish Council. This would then be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Container for BTR field – The Clerk confirmed that she was making some enquiries about this and was hopeful that a container could be secured for use by the Lengthsman.

Hanging Baskets - It was agreed that all Parish Councillors would look for suitable locations for hanging baskets or plant troughs and email the Clerk with suggested locations. It was noted that for lamp posts this would need to include the street and

the lamp post number. This would then be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.

Shop Local Business Scheme – It was agreed that Councillor Michael Green would draft a paper with some suggestions and this would be discussed further at the next meeting of the Parish Council. Councillor Paul Buckley suggested that the Parish Council could look at having hessian bags which could be used as part of the shopping scheme. It was agreed that Councillor Paul Buckley, Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton could look at this as well and make some recommendations to the Parish Council.

Farington and Lostock Hall in Bloom – As discussed earlier it had been reported that the Leyland in Bloom was continuing but without a separate Farington and Lostock Hall in Bloom. It was agreed that the Clerk should ask the Borough Council to return the shields provided by the Parish Council and that the Parish Council would look at having their own in Bloom competition.

SPiDs – The Parish Council had previously agreed that this was a project that they would like to take forward and two sites were suggested; Croston Road near to the primary school and Stanifield Lane just after Lydiate Lane. The Clerk agreed to contact Lancashire County Council to see if these possible sites could be investigated.

Resolved

- i) That, an application is made to the Farington Fund for £40,000 towards the refurbishment of St Paul's Park playground.
- ii) That, Councillor Paul Buckley, Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton produce a draft newsletter, together with the cost of deliver, and forward to the Clerk by 26 February 2021 who would then forward it to the Parish Council for comments/approval.
- iii) That, the Chairman, Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman forwards to the Clerk information on a new Parish Council website, which will then be circulated to the Parish Council and discussed at the next meeting.
- iv) That, suggestions for suitable locations for hanging baskets and plant troughs are forwarded to the Clerk and this would be discussed at the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- v) That, information regarding the Shop Local Business Scheme is presented to the next meeting of the Parish Council for discussion.
- vi) That, Councillor Paul Buckley, Councillor Michael Green and Councillor Mrs Karen Walton consider the cost and design of hessian bags and report back to the next meeting of the Parish Council.
- vii) That, the Clerk asks for the return of the Farington and Lostock Hall in Bloom shields purchased by the Parish Council, and the Parish Council will consider running their own in Bloom Competition.

viii) That, the Clerk contacts Lancashire County Council with two suggested sites for permanent SPiDs for investigation as to their suitability.

46. (20/21) Financial Matters

Resolved

1) It was noted that we had £77,573.39 (bank statement up to 9 January 2021) in the bank.

It was noted that since the last meeting we had paid: -

- 19/12/20 – Newgate Nurseries for plants £97.56 (Cheque no 961).
- 19/12/20 – St Paul’s Church Annual Lease Payment for 2020 £500 (Cheque no 962).
- 30/12/20 – SLCC Annual Membership Fee £234 (Cheque no 963).
- 07/01/21 – HMRC Q3 Tax and NI £573.78 (Cheque no 964)
- 01/01/21 – Clerk’s salary £1,022.50 + reimbursement for replacement solar powered light at Mill Street £85.49 = total £1,107.99 (Cheque no 965).
- 14/01/21 – Peter Heise, Lengthsman’s wages £439.50. (Cheque no 966).
- 29/01/21 – Peter Heise, Lengthsman’s wages £879.00. (Cheque no 967).
- 31/01/21 – SRBC for dog bins November and December £595.19. (cheque no 968).

It was also noted that we had paid the following direct debits: -

British Gas for BTR field – 20 November £141.42; 22 December £150.65; Water Plus for water BTR field £194.14 and Pension Clerk – 4 December £54.32.

2) There were no further invoices for payment at the meeting.

3) It was agreed to appoint Donna Kidd as the Internal Auditor at a cost of £70.

47. (20/21) Borough Council and County Council reports – for information only

Councillor Michael Green reported that a local resident was seeking support to have 23 March as a national holiday and day of remembrance for all those who had lost their lives due to covid. It was agreed that the Parish Council would write a letter of support.

There was nothing further to report.

48. (20/21) Clerk’s Report – For Information Only

The Clerk reported that she had received a reply from the applicant who was interested in the vacancy and an apology that she was unable to attend at the last minute due to a family issue.

49. (20/21) Next Meeting

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting was due to be held on 8 March 2021 and that this would be held remotely. The Clerk would circulate the link and make this available to the public.

Local Government Act 1972

That the public be excluded from this meeting during consideration of the following items of business on the grounds that there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information which is described in the paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 which is specified against the heading to each item, and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.

50. (20/21) Maintenance Tenders for 2021/2022 (Para 3)

The Clerk reported that she had now received the quote from South Ribble Borough Council for the maintenance of St Paul's park and BTR field.

Resolved

- 1) That, the tender for the maintenance of St Paul's park for 2021/2022 from South Ribble Borough Council for £2016.24 + VAT is approved and accepted.
- 2) That, the tender for the hedge cutting on BTR field for 2021/2022 from South Ribble Borough Council for two cuts at £152.90 + VAT is approved and accepted.

51. (20/21) Staff Appraisals (Para 1)

The Parish Council agreed to carry out an annual appraisal for the Clerk. It was noted that the Standing Orders of the Parish Council would need to be amended to reflect this, and therefore it was agreed that the amended Standing Orders would be presented to the next meeting of the Parish Council. It was further agreed to establish an Employment Sub-Committee, to undertake the annual appraisal, which would consist of the Chairman (currently Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman), Councillor Paul Buckley and Councillor Elaine Robb.

Resolved

- i) That, the Parish Council agrees to carry out an annual appraisal for the Clerk and that this would be carried out by an Employment Sub-Committee consisting of the Chairman (currently Councillor Paul Wharton-Hardman), Councillor Paul Buckley and Councillor Elaine Robb.
- ii) That, in order to carry out the above, the Standing Orders of the Parish Council would need to be amended and that the amended Standing Orders will be presented at the next meeting of the Parish Council.