

<p><b>MINUTES OF THE FARNDON ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1st APRIL 2025 AT 7.00PM, IN THE MEMORIAL HALL, FARNDON.</b></p>
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**Present:** Cllr V Roberts (Chair), Cllr H Williams (Vice Chair), Cllr F Henderson, Cllr A Foster, Cllr P Amphlett, Cllr P Fish, Cllr P Roberts, Cllr B Hillyer, Cllr K Davies, Cllr G Dawson.

**Also in attendance:** Mrs C Taylor, Clerk and Mr E Barnston.

**Apologies:** Cllr M Rudd, Borough Cllr A Waddelove, Mrs M Jones.

**50.25 CHAIRMAN'S REPORT.**

The Chairman read the report:

Welcome

Looking back at my records, I was surprised to find that I have been Chairman of this Parish council on 6 separate occasions, including last year. Over this time, my annual reports seem to have had a number of repeating themes, including parking problems, potential housing developments, dog fouling and anti-social behaviour/vandalism, and I will mention some of these again later in this report.

2024 has seen 2 new Parish Councillors co-opted to replace Cllrs Sue Rowlandson and Dave Finlay. We welcome Katina Davies and Glenys Dawson and hope they enjoy their time on the Council.

The Cheshire Association of Local Councils runs a wide range of training courses from finding out what a Parish Council can, can't or should do to the responsibilities of being Chairman, our role in the planning process and plenty more. They are all online these days and are really excellent courses. I would urge all councillors who haven't done the basic councillor's training to do so (we have money in our budget for this) and I would hope that in future it will be a requirement for all new councillors if it isn't already.

Now a few thank yous:

To our street cleaner, George and to our clerk, Claire, whose firm but gentle hand keeps us under control and up-to-date.

To Cllr Henderson for continuing to edit the biannual Parish Council Newsletter, and to all councillors for delivering it.

To Cllr Paul Roberts for initiating and progressing the History Board project, by which a brief history of Farndon will be attractively displayed at a central point in the village for everyone to see.

To Paul Griffiths, who has done a range of handyman and gardening jobs around the village for us, and also to Hugh Sym, who together with Paul, set up and looked after the village Christmas trees this year.

To Ed Barnston for once again donating a lovely Christmas tree to the village, and also this year for donating to Restaurant 209 so that tapas and drinks could be enjoyed by the band and others.

To Farndon Band, for coming to play carols round the tree and then later at the Church for their tree festival.

To J&L Garden services for their excellent care of the churchyard and other areas grass cutting and related jobs.

To Borough Cllr Adrian Waddelove for his attendance at and reports to our council meetings. This year he has also made a number of contributions from his member's budget to enhance our village: a contractor to clear weeds from the gullies, new village signs and also further work on grounds maintenance round the public toilets area.

To Cllr Hillyer for her persistence in establishing Green George, formerly called the Give Box, where people can donate and take household items. This is a shed placed in the car park behind the Farndon War Memorial Hall and was established in 2023. Although concerns about the contents being scattered around have not materialised, there is a continuing problem with larger, and/or damaged, items being dumped behind Green George, and the shed being overfilled with donations. Various people monitor, tidy and sort from time to time. Some of the excess can be passed on to other charities, but some has to be tipped. It is frustrating that there seem to be people who think that by leaving items, some of which are damaged and so unusable, out in the rain is an altruistic thing to do rather than putting them in their black bin, taking them to the tip or donating to a charity if the items are large but still usable.

To Cllrs Hillyer and Amphlett who made great strides in trying to get the Youth Sports and Social Club off the ground in 2024, but unfortunately it was unable to continue through the Autumn and Winter. I understand it is due to restart in April. I very much hope this project will succeed as it will be a valuable resource for the young people of our village. Also, thanks to Farndon Community Club, who agreed to take on the sponsorship of this project so that funding could be applied for.

For some years there have been complaints that the street light on Sibbersfield Lane just inside the grounds of Farndon Community Club was not working and as a Council we have been unable to find out who is responsible for its maintenance. This year we budgeted to have the electricity supply investigated and the light brought back into use if possible, and this was successfully done thanks to Claire finding a contractor willing to undertake the job. The Parish Council also paid for the hedgerow in the same area to be cut back, so pedestrians can now walk to the Club much more safely in the dark evenings.

Minor repairs to the boardwalk have been a constant theme in recent years, but we anticipate some fairly major refurbishment in the not-too-distant future and are setting money aside in the budget accordingly.

After a 6 month trial of two additional evening bus services on Fridays and Saturdays thanks to the efforts of our previous and current Borough Councillors, the Parish Council is very pleased that these services have now been incorporated into the permanent timetable.

The electronic "slow down" sign on the A534 has had yet another part replaced and does seem to be working again. However, we have been told through Cllr Waddelove that this will be the last time it will be repaired, as it is too expensive to repair now. I was therefore interested to note that during my first stint as Chairman, in 1999/2000, I reported as follows:

*"Continuing concerns about the dangerous crossing on the bypass led to a visit by a County Council officer who discussed the issue with the Parish Council in some detail and told us that he was bidding for an experimental junction control to be installed by the Department of Transport, which would*

*have flashing signs alerting drivers on the bypass to the existence of cars waiting to emerge from the two smaller roads. We still await confirmation that this will be installed, but if it is, we are very hopeful that it will bring driving speeds down and thus reduce accidents.”*

I don't believe that the sign we have got is only activated to show that cars are waiting to emerge from either Worthenbury Road or Sibbersfield Lane, as I cannot see how it would know. There are no cameras and I don't believe there is any wiring under the road surface. And the one initially installed on the eastbound side has long ago been removed, I have no idea by whom. I believe what we have is just activated when cars approach.

In any event now we have come full circle, as what we have will disappear once it ceases to work this time. Whether it has had the desired effect I personally cannot say. Accidents have continued to happen but I hope less frequently than before the sign was installed. Nevertheless, I am still of the view that this is a very dangerous junction, and that a mini-roundabout would improve the safety here enormously.

There hasn't been a huge amount of anti-social behaviour in the village this year, with the exception of a number of reports about youngsters smoking cannabis in the new burial ground pavilion, all of which have been reported to the Police. Until very recently, there doesn't seem to have been a response from the Police, but the beat sergeant who attended our February meeting gave assurances that action would be taken.

Dog-poo does not seem to have been so much of an issue this year. So thank you to everyone who takes the trouble to clear up after their dogs and dispose of the waste in a proper bin. Long may it continue.

We now have five defibrillators around the village. Most recently, following an offer of grant match-funding by London Hearts, a charity working on behalf of the DHSS, and with the help of Roland Twydell who has agreed to be its custodian, one has been installed at Crewe-by-Farndon Methodist Chapel. The Parish Council was delighted to hear that Farndon Community Club had achieved their fund-raising target and that the roof repairs began in December. As always, more problems arose during the work, but the March deadline for completion was still able to be achieved.

The Parish Council has agreed a grant of £2000 towards the redecoration of the main hall in this Memorial Hall, and the work should be done in August. The problems encountered in 2023 with the Wild Camping site along the river near the bypass bridge did not recur in 2024. A planning application has been lodged for a camping site in a nearby location, which is yet to be determined. The promised repairs to the fishing pegs were put on hold by the Environment Agency when more problems were discovered, so nothing actually happened in 2024. However, they've recently told us that they will progress the disabled/family fishing peg and one or two others in the near future, and will attend a future Parish Council meeting to tell us about their plans. As this is one of the few stretches available for public fishing without being a member of a club, we are of course keen to see the fishing pegs brought safely back into use.

The Speed Gun has not been used for a while but Cllr Henderson has volunteered to take over as co-ordinator and once she has received her in-depth training, the original group of volunteers will be reconvened and the

speed gun will be deployed once again to discourage drivers from speeding into and out of our village.

Virgin Media has installed full fibre broadband around the village and a number of residents are taking advantage of it. I believe that BT broadband may also be available later this year.

More than two years after Severn Trent first promised that the temporary blue pipe running across the bridge would be removed within six months, it finally has. And with a bit of prompting, Severn Trent did come back and remove all the weeds that had established themselves around the pipe. At the moment it's looking really good.

And finally, the new Government has indicated the need for more housing to be built country-wide, with the planning process speeded up. So, although there's nothing in the immediate future for our village, don't be surprised if one or two new applications appear sooner rather than later!

My apologies for any events or acknowledgements I have failed to include.

I would like to thank all my fellow parish councillors for their support during the year. For more years than I care to remember, mostly the same people put themselves forward to serve on the Parish Council, so I'm very pleased that in the last few years many new faces, and some people fairly new to the village, have stepped forward. New people, new skills, new enthusiasms are the lifeblood of any Parish Council and will, I am sure, contribute much to future plans and ideas, helping to take them forward to fruition.

**Resolved:** Noted.

#### **51.25 OPEN FORUM**

Nothing raised.

The meeting finished at 7.30 pm and was followed by the April Parish Council meeting.