

**EAST FARNDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AT THE VILLAGE HALL
GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY 12TH NOVEMBER 2019 COMMENCING AT 7.45PM
PRESENT: Mr. R West (Chair), Mr. R Burton, Mr. M Curtis, Ms. J Prew
Mrs. C Burton (Clerk to the Parish Council)
OTHER RESIDENTS IN ATTENDANCE – None**

- 73. Apologies for Absence**
Apologies received and accepted from Councillors Cooper, Hodgetts and Crifo.
- 74. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**
There were no Declarations of Interest.
- 75. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting 8th October 2019**
The Minutes of the above meeting were agreed by all Councillors and signed by the Chair.
- 76. Matters Arising**

ACTION	PROGRESS
Councillor Burton to draft a letter to request a) the Speed Limit Review Panel reconsider the application to lower the 60mph limit and b) that average speed cameras are installed.	Carried forward
Councillor West to remove vegetation around The Spring.	Carried forward – Councillor West confirmed that this has been booked for November 2019, after nesting of birds
Tree wardens to apply for a TPO in respect of the beech tree on the village green.	Ongoing
Clerk to complete the GDS basic website accessibility check and report back at the November 2019 meeting.	Done – item added to the agenda
Clerk to draft a Street Lighting policy for the November 2019 meeting.	Done – item added to the agenda
Clerk to draft new Financial Regulations for the May 2020 meeting.	Carried forward
Clerk to complete ICO Toolkit and report on results at the November 2019 meeting.	Done – item added to the agenda
Clerk to add action following possible cessation of parish newsletter to November 2019 meeting agenda.	Temporary editor for newsletter found
Clerk to investigate costs of obtaining ‘No dog-fouling’ notices for The Lealand.	Done – DDC provided signs free of charge
Clerk to raise a query with BHIB insurance as regards any changes needed after the Parish Council assumes maintenance responsibility of the Churchyard.	Done – item added to the agenda
Clerk to obtain relevant contact details for liaison regarding work relating to Application DA/2016/0801 (installation of a back-up power generation facility off Lubenham Road).	Done – item added to the agenda

ACTION	PROGRESS
Clerk to see if lamp post on Harborough Road can be upgraded when moved as part of the road widening for the back-up power generation work.	Ongoing
Clerk to contact Bray & Bray to see if they hold deeds to the Village Hall land.	Done – item added to the agenda
Clerk to update the Fixed Asset Register to include the Village Hall land.	Done

77. Roads and Transport

- **Speeding (including Community Speed Watch)**

Councillor Burton reported that Community Speed Watch had again been undertaken in October 2019, and there had been further enforcement visits by the police. It is intended to participate again in Community Speed Watch in 2020. Councillor Burton has contacted the police to ask if Road Safety Funding can be applied for in support of the Action listed above to lower the 60mph limit and to install average speed cameras; response awaited.

- **Bus Service 59**

The Clerk reported that Uno took over the bus service 59/60 from Monday 28 October 2019. Unfortunately service 59 will no longer be able to serve East Farndon due to the road junctions not being suitable for the length of vehicles that Uno plan to use on the service. However, in 6 months only 4 passenger journeys have commenced in the village. The Clerk queried the issue and was advised by Northamptonshire Highways that Uno carried out a full route test on the 59/60 and came back with this comment: *Unfortunately the turn ex Market Harborough in East Farndon into Marston Road is not possible. We were only able to get 3/4 of the bus into the turn. The outbound working is possible but very tight. We are therefore unable to operate the section via East Farndon.* The Clerk has ensured villagers have been notified via Facebook and the website, and has put a notice up at the bus stop. No villagers have contacted the Clerk in this regard.

78. Planning and Development

Applications granted - None

Applications for consideration - None

79. Other Matters

- **Footpath Report** (including obscured footpath sign)

The Footpath Warden has been unable to check all footpaths due to the recent wet weather. The Clerk advised that a resident has raised the issue of the sign for the footpath (fingerpost) that runs alongside Red Brick Cottage. Apparently, that particular walk appeared in a local magazine and people were told to park at the church and follow the sign. People have been turning up to do the walk, but cannot find the start of the footpath as it is obscured under the beech tree. She has raised the issue with the Footpath Warden, who has reported the issue.

- **Burial Ground Committee**

The Clerk reported that Richard Green has accepted a quotation for cutting the hedge of £120.00 per cut twice a year, and a one-off cost to cut the trees of £50.00. The ground has been very wet, so when it has dried out they will carry out the work. Further, he has had to clean up dog mess three times, and he believes it may be the same dog – Richard asks if anyone knows the owner of the dog, could they please let him know.

- **Neighbourhood Watch** – no report
- **Local Government Reform (LGR)**
The Clerk reported that the draft Structural Changes Order (SCO), which is the document that gives legal effect to the creation of the unitary councils, was laid in parliament on 28 October 2019. It was expected to complete the necessary processes before parliament was dissolved on 6 November 2019, but unfortunately this did not happen. NCALC advise there is no reason not to expect it to make progress when parliament re-opens after the General Election, but clearly that depends on who is in charge; if a majority Conservative government is returned. then the SCO will presumably progress, but if a majority Labour government is returned then NCALC can see there being a “review” and all sorts of outcomes are possible. For the time being, the LGR Programme continues.

- **Tree Warden Report**

The Tree Wardens carried out an inspection of all the trees subject to a TPO and have provided the Parish Council with details. The issues arising are:

- TPO DA 280 (T3 – yew at 1 Rectory Court): side closest to garage has evidence of relatively recent heavy branch removal leaving defoliated stumps and unbalanced shape, and no permission granted for work
- TPO DA 280 (T4, T5 and T6 – two oaks and an ash at 2 Rectory Court): Not visible with possible evidence of large tree stumps covered in ivy, suggesting trees may have been cut down without permission
- TPO DA 280 (T10 – sycamore on churchyard boundary with 4 Rectory Court on the corner with the road: large and starting to lean over road due to lack of light; severe ivy coverage; and possibility of future damage to church retaining wall by roots
- TPO 383 (T1 and T2 – two ashes on raised bank next to garages to north of Farrer Cottages): Unsure of ownership. Councillor West suggested contacting John Smith or Mr & Mrs Ellis to confirm
- TPO 206 (T1, T2 and T3 – two copper beeches and an atlas cedar at Pheasant View): Beeches are only about 12 feet tall (but healthy) and atlas cedar could not be found
- TPO DA 38 (T1 – ash in field opposite the Manor): Unsure of ownership. Councillor West advised the owner is Philip Cowan of The Manor

ACTION: Clerk to establish ownership of trees subject to TPO 383 (two ashes near garages at Farrer Cottages).

ACTION: Clerk to contact DDC for advice on appropriate action to take regarding TPO tree issues.

The tree wardens also suggest that all owners with TPO trees are notified of their responsibilities by way of a leaflet or similar from the Parish Council. The Parish Council agreed, and also agreed that the information should be placed on the website.

ACTION: Clerk to send a letter and a copy of the TPO guidance leaflet to all owners of TPO trees.

ACTION: Clerk to place TPO information on the website.

- **Transfer of Churchyard (to include insurance after Parish Council assumes maintenance responsibility of the Churchyard)**

The Clerk contacted the Parish Council insurers, BHIB, regarding any issues arising after the Parish Council assumes maintenance responsibility of the churchyard. They spoke directly to the insurance company, who have dealt with a few such cases, and advised:

- The Parish Council's insurance premium is unaffected by taking on the graveyard maintenance responsibility
- As regards monuments, our existing insurance policy already covers us (subject to annual checks and work being done if anything 'not safe'. The work must be done by a member of the Parish Council, or a specialist)
- As regards trees, we are covered under our existing insurance policy for public liability. However, we need to ensure trees are regularly checked/action taken
- As regards mowing/hedgework, this must be done by a member of the Parish Council or someone with public liability insurance
- As regards the boundary wall, the Parish Council has no 'insurable interest' (as we have no legal ownership). Therefore, the insurers advise that our only duty is to report any potential hazard to the owners

ACTION: Clerk to check that mowing contractor has public liability insurance.

- **GDS Basic Website Accessibility Check**

The Clerk has completed the above, and prepared a report which has been circulated to all Councillors.

The Clerk recommended the following immediate actions:

- Ensure all the webpages are explicit that the documents can be accessed via links
- List the meeting dates as HTML content on webpage (rather than as a link)
- Update page headings to reflect that they relate to the Parish Council, e.g. amend 'Minutes' to 'Parish Council Minutes'
- Avoid the use of scanned-in documents. The only time this has arisen is where a paper report was provided at the Annual General Meeting in March 2019, and this has been scanned in as an attachment to the minutes

ACTION: Clerk to address the immediate action items arising from the Website Accessibility Check.

The Clerk also raised the issue of uploaded documents: PDFs present accessibility issues for some, and all documents are in PDF format. PDFs or other documents published before 23 September 2018 are exempt from the accessibility regulations (unless users need them to in order to use a service, which is not applicable to the Parish Council). The advice is that PDFs should be presented as HTML content (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-publish-on-gov-uk/accessible-pdfs>).

However, given the high number of documents produced by the Parish Council, this would involve considerable time to place the documents onto the website in HTML format; indeed, the previous website administrator reported on the problems in keeping the formatting (it is not a simple 'cut and paste' task), which was why the Parish Council moved over to uploading documents in a PDF format.

The Parish Council agreed that it would not produce minutes, policies, etc. as HTML content, as the time/cost involved would be a disproportionate burden.

As regards the accessibility of the PDFs, the documents are originally created in Word, and then converted to PDFs using Microsoft Office. A document created in Word should contain almost all the information necessary for an accessible PDF, such as headings, legible text size, good contrast, and no colour reliance. After the PDF conversion, some clean up may be necessary, e.g. table headers will need to be assigned a scope, and tables with multiple levels of headers will require more significant work, but these are the exception—other accessibility information should carry over cleanly.

The Clerk has run a copy of the last minutes through the Word Accessibility Checker. There were two issues. Firstly, the tables can cause problems; however, general accessibility guidelines state tables can be used to present numerical information (which is the purpose of the tables). Secondly, the headings have not been labelled as such, which means that assistive tools may not recognise them as such, to help readers with vision and reading impairments navigate the document.

In general terms, the documents meet accessibility guidelines, e.g. not justified, absence of underlining, etc., apart from the font used. The Parish Council has traditionally used 'Times New Roman', but should be using a *sans serif* font, such as Arial.

The Parish Council agreed that no historic clean-up of documents would be undertaken as the time/cost involved would be a disproportionate burden.

The Parish Council agreed that going forward, PDFs would be continued to be used, with a note on the website to contact the Clerk if any users could not access them.

The Parish Council also agreed that going forward, all documents would be produced in Arial font; headings/sub-headings should be labelled as per the accessibility guidelines.

ACTION: Clerk to ensure future documents are produced in Arial font, with headings/sub-headings labelled.

The Clerk also raised the issue of website navigation and HTML checks. Whilst the website passed the majority of the navigation and HTML checks, there are five areas where the website did not meet the accessibility check:

- There are site links down the left-hand side of the webpage; you are forced to tab through each item individually every time a new page is opened and this cannot be skipped
- Content is usable when you zoom in, but the content does not reformat in an accessible way as you need to use both the horizontal and vertical navigation scroll
- The colour contrast between buttons/navigational elements and the background of the website is at least 3:1, apart from the main heading 'Parish Council', which changes to light grey when the subpages are opened
- The website does not offer any other form on navigation, such as a search bar or site map
- There is only one bullet list (on the Parish Council home page). No tags appear despite being styled properly, so screen reader software will not recognise what they are and will not convey the information in a way that makes sense to users.

The Clerk would assess these accessibility issues as minor. Further, these are issues relating to the website design, which the Parish Council does not have control over, as it uses the BT Community Web Kit service. Therefore, to address these issues, a new webhosting service would need to be sourced.

The Parish Council agreed that it would not be changing its webhosting service at this time, as the time/cost involved would be a disproportionate burden. This issue will be reviewed if it needs to change its webhosting service in the future.

The Clerk advised that once the Parish Council has agreed its plan, it needs to publish an accessibility statement to explain how accessible its website is. A sample statement is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sample-accessibility-statement>

ACTION: Clerk to draft a website accessibility statement for consideration at the March 2020 meeting.

- **Street Lighting Policy**

The Clerk had circulated a draft policy, based on best practice. The draft policy was approved and adopted by the Parish Council.

ACTION: Clerk to place the Street Lighting policy on the website.

- ICO Toolkit**

The Clerk has completed the ICO toolkit, and provided the Councillors with the various reports. The Parish Council was assessed as 'Green' in three areas (Data Control, Data Processing and Data Sharing) and 'Amber' in two areas (Records Management and Information Security). The other two checklists (Direct Marketing and CCTV) were not applicable.

The Clerk advised that the main issue is to review the Parish Council's Risk Assessment to consider potential risks associated with data, and what measures the Parish Council could/should put in place to mitigate/eliminate them.

ACTION: The Clerk and Councillor Burton are to consider and draft changes to the Risk Assessment associated with data, for consideration at the January 2020 meeting.
- VE Day 75 Celebration**

The Clerk reported that Judy Hodgetts is planning a picnic on Marriott Green on 10 May 2020 at midday after the morning church service. As the church gates are the WW2 memorial, she is also hoping to get the gates repaired/re-hung and the stone plaque re-etched. The PCC are happy for this to be done. However, as the church is a listed building, the gates are also listed and therefore, permission will be required from DDC before any work can be done. She is hoping to meet the costs of this work from either a grant or fund-raising.
- Work Relating to Application DA/2016/0801 (installation of a back-up power generation facility off Lubenham Road)**

The Clerk reported that she now has a named contact at Mercia Power, and has contacted them to remind them that under paragraph 13.1 of the Construction Management Plan, it states *'The Developer and contractor will liaise with East Farndon Parish Council and local residents to inform them when the works are anticipated to commence and, in particular when the generator containers are due to be delivered, so any concerns they might have can be raised and be resolved.'*; to request confirmation of exactly what works are proposed, and when; and to highlight that the lamp post cannot be moved without the express permission of the Parish Council. Mercia Power acknowledged the note regarding the lamp post, and have advised that they currently do not have a finalised scheme for works that may be required at the junction, nor do they have a program for when any such works will be carried out. Likewise, they do not yet have a date for when the generation equipment will be delivered to the site. They advise that they will be sure to contact the Clerk again once these details are confirmed.

Councillor West queried whether the work should have started by now.

ACTION: Clerk to contact DDC to query start date of work relating to Application DA/2016/0801 (installation of a back-up power generation facility off Lubenham Road).
- Village Hall Land Deeds**

The Clerk reported that she had contacted Bray & Bray, but they do not hold the deeds and there is no evidence that they ever have. However, the Clerk has obtained a Land Registry copy of the Title Register and Plan for £6.00, which shows the Parish Council as the registered owner of the Village Hall land.

- **Candidacy at the May 2020 Elections**

The Clerk advised that all parish and town councils in Northamptonshire, including East Farndon Parish Council, will have elections on Thursday 7 May 2020. These will coincide with elections to the shadow unitary councils and also the election of the Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Because of Local Government Reform, parish and town councillors are currently serving a five-year term of office. The next term will also be five years and then every four years, so that parish and town council elections and unitary council elections are aligned in the future. NCALC have advised Parish Councils to try to determine how many existing Councillors already know that they will not be seeking re-election; there is nothing in law that requires a Councillor to make any such declaration, but the point is to help the council understand what it is likely to be facing in terms of candidates required. No Councillors indicated that they intend to not seek re-election.

- **2020 Meeting Dates**

The Parish Council agreed the following meeting dates:

14 January 2020

17 March 2020 – Annual Meeting of the Parish

12 May 2020 – Annual Meeting of the Parish Council

14 July 2020

8 September 2020

10 November 2020

The Parish Council also agreed the following provisional meetings dates, which will only go ahead if there is urgent business to discuss, e.g. a planning application:

11 February 2020

21 April 2020

9 June 2020

11 August 2020

13 October 2020

8 December 2020

ACTION: Clerk to place the 2020 meeting dates on the website.

- **Rough Sleepers Estimate 2019**

The Clerk advised that DDC have requested an evidence-based estimate of the rough sleepers in the Parish on 14 November 2019. It was agreed that a nil return would be submitted by the Clerk unless any evidence is offered to the contrary before then.

ACTION: Clerk to submit Rough Sleepers Estimate 2019.

- **Armed Forces Covenant**

The Clerk reported that the Defence Regional Employer Engagement Director (part of MOD) is encouraging all Parish Councils to sign an Armed Forces Covenant. This is a commitment to endeavour in its business dealings to uphold the key principles of the Armed Forces Covenant, which are:

- No member of the Armed Forces Community should face disadvantage in the provision of public and commercial services compared to any other citizen
- In some circumstances special treatment may be appropriate especially for the injured or bereaved.

The Covenant also includes pledges to demonstrate commitment, from promoting the fact that we are an Armed Forces-friendly Council, to promoting Armed Forces events such as local Breakfast Clubs, Coffee Mornings, Armed Forces Day, Reserves Day, the Poppy Appeal Day and Remembrance activities.

The Parish Council agreed that it wanted to sign an Armed Forces Covenant.

ACTION: Clerk to draft an Armed Forces Covenant for consideration at the January 2020 meeting.

- **Parking on Pavements**

The Clerk reported that a resident has raised the issue of vehicles parking on the pavement along the Harborough Road. The Clerk has referred the resident to the PCSO, Kevin Lumbis, who is monitoring the situation.

ACTION: Clerk to remind all residents not to park on the pavement in the next newsletter.

- **Dog Fouling**

The Clerk reported that a resident has raised the issue of dog fouling in the village.

ACTION: Clerk to remind all residents to ensure they clear up after their dog in the next newsletter.

80. Finance

- **Bank Reconciliation**

<u>Balance as at 9 September 2019</u>		
Current account	£11,068.74	
Deposit account	£1,551.12	
		£12,619.86
<u>Income</u>		
Precept	£4,750.00	
Interest	£0.13	
		£4,750.13
<u>Expenses</u>		
		-£410.85
<u>Balance as at 1 November 2019</u>		
Current account	£15,407.89	
Deposit account	£1,551.25	
		£16,959.14

The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Councillor Curtis.

- **2020/21 Budget and Precept Discussion (including Actual v. Budgeted Spending)**

The Clerk had prepared actual v budgeted spend for 2019/20 to date; anticipated income and spending for the rest of 2019/20; and a draft budget for 2020/21 for discussion (see attached). After discussion, the Councillors agreed the draft budget as present (with an increase of £5 on the Clerk's wages). An LGR fund was not thought to be necessary. It was also agreed that in 2019/20, the Clerk would be paid at the end of the year for any unused holiday allowance and excess hours. A similar approach would be adopted in 2020/21 if necessary.

ACTION: Clerk to finalise 2020/21 budget and prepare 2020/21 precept request for January 2020 meeting.

The following payments were agreed by all Councillors

Payee	Reason	Amount £	Chq no.
Mrs J Hodgetts	Purchase of Plaque for Beech Tree	37.49	online
SLCC	Subscription	76.00	online
Caroline Burton	Clerk salary and expenses for October/November 2019	448.80	online
Royal British Legion	Wreath for Remembrance	17.00	771

81. Correspondence

All other relevant correspondence (e.g. NCALC Newsletter) has been circulated to Councillors and shared on the village website and Facebook page where appropriate.

82. Any Other Business

- The Clerk confirmed that she had applied for a copy of revised Electoral Register, due to published in February 2020.
- Councillor West confirmed that East Farndon United Charities has a vacancy for one member, which they are seeking to fill.

83. Date of the next meeting – 14th January 2020 at 7.45pm
Provisional meeting date – 10th December 2019 at 7.45pm

84. Closure

The meeting closed at 9.27 p.m.

Signed that the Minutes are a true and accurate record

Chairman _____

Dated _____

SPENDING IN 2019/20 (EXCL. VAT)	PRECEPT 2019/20	PAID TO DATE	ANTICIPATED REST OF YEAR SPEND	TOTAL YEAR ANTICIPATED SPEND
STREETLIGHTING AND MAINTENANCE	£1,500.00	£1,090.12	£775.50	£1,865.62
NCALC	£240.00	£237.10		£237.10
INSURANCE	£800.00	£683.08		£683.08
DONATIONS	£100.00	£43.20		£43.20
TRAINING	£200.00		£100.00	£100.00
MOWING OF BURIAL GROUND/HEDGES	£2,250.00		£2,120.00	£2,120.00
CLERK GROSS SALARY	£2,600.00	£1,268.40	£1,268.40	£2,536.80
PARISH COUNCIL/CLERK EXPENSES	£400.00	£273.37	£100.00	£373.37
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	£200.00		£200.00	£200.00
GRAVEYARD RESPONSIBILITY	£1,000.00			£0.00
DPO	£10.00	£10.00		£10.00
DEFIBRILLATOR EXPENSES	£200.00	£126.00		£126.00
TOTAL	£9,500.00			£8,295.17

BALANCE IN ACCOUNTS @ 1 NOVEMBER 2019		
CURRENT ACCOUNT	£15,407.89	
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	£1,551.25	
TOTAL		£16,959.14

LESS ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURE (EXCL. VAT)		
Clerk's salary (Oct 19 - Mar 20)	£1,268.40	
EON electricity (Oct - Dec 19)	£221.59	
EON lighting maintenance (Oct - Dec 19)	£53.91	
Mowing of burial ground	£1,520.00	
Hedgework	£600.00	
Misc - including Clerk/PC expenses, training and lighting repairs	£900.00	
TOTAL		£4,563.90

PLUS ANTICIPATED INCOME		
PCC contribution to mowing	£506.00	
Interest	£0.42	
TOTAL		£506.42

ESTIMATED BALANCE AS AT 31ST MARCH 2019		£12,901.66
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SUGGESTED RESERVES	
Lighting Replacement	£2,000.00
Renovation of Village Spring	£500.00
Churchyard Maintenance Work	£1,000.00

Balance **£9,401.66**

SUGGESTED 2020/21 PRECEPT

STREETLIGHTING AND MAINTENANCE	£2,000.00	To cover electricity/maintenance plus replacement of 2 lights, plus inflation increase
NCALC	£245.00	Based on NALC's advice
INSURANCE	£800.00	
DONATIONS	£100.00	
TRAINING	£100.00	
MOWING OF BURIAL GROUND/HEDGES	£2,400.00	Current year spend plus inflation increase
CLERK GROSS SALARY	£2,640.00	Working on 20 hours pcm and salary scale increase to SPC 11 rate - £11.00 ph? (estimated - delay in publishing scales)
PARISH COUNCIL/CLERK EXPENSES	£350.00	Including DPO and ICO fees (est. £50), Clerk's SLLC fee (est. £80), Clerk homeworking allowance (£10 pcm)
MISCELLANEOUS EXPENSES	£100.00	Website (£35.00) plus contingency for unexpected expenses
GRAVEYARD RESPONSIBILITY	£1,000.00	
ELECTION EXPENSES (MAY 2020)	£260.00	Contested seats? Budget £1 per elector (257 electors)
DEFIBRILLATOR EXPENSES	£200.00	Annual fee £126 plus unforeseen expenses
LGR FUND (as per NCALC's email 28/10)?		
TOTAL	£10,195.00	