

**EAST FARDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AT THE VILLAGE HALL
GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL**

WEDNESDAY 18TH JANUARY 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.15PM

PRESENT: Mr M Curtis (Chair), Ms M Duke, Mr P Hodgetts, Ms S Beesley, Ms E Pepler, Mr B Fallon

Mrs C Burton (Clerk to the Parish Council)

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: WNC Councillor Irving-Swift and one resident

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Councillor Harrison.

2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

None, apart from Councillor Hodgetts' interest in item 7 – Churchyard Maintenance, in which he would not participate (apart from providing information as necessary) or vote.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council on 15th November 2022

The Minutes of the above meeting were agreed by all Councillors.

4. Matters Arising

ACTION	PROGRESS
Burial Ground Committee to resolve remaining query on burial plot ownership.	Ongoing
Councillor Fallon to progress an update of the village Wikipedia page.	Ongoing
Clerk and Burial Ground Committee to address the memorials not fixed to their plinths.	Ongoing
Clerk to ensure Yu Energy have applied the new UMS issued.	Done – new UMS applied
Councillor Fallon to progress speed reduction actions.	Added to agenda
Clerk to investigate whether electric fences around fields containing footpaths should be marked as such.	Done – electric fences only need marking if they run alongside public footpaths
Councillor Beesley to provide an estimate of costs associated with the 2023 Big Spring Clean	Added to agenda
Councillor Curtis to post information regarding the village defibrillator on the website and social media.	Done
Councillor Duke to co-ordinate the compilation of a local list of heritage assets and get fee quotes from archaeological consultants for a potential East Fardon heritage project.	Added to agenda
Clerk to move £500 from the Jubilee Commemorative Booklet Printing reserve to the War Memorial Restoration reserve.	Done
War Memorial Working Group to report on fundraising progress at the January 2023 meeting.	Added to agenda
Councillor Curtis and Clerk to progress streetlighting installation and publicise this change on the website and social media.	Added to agenda
Councillor Beesley to provide NCALC 75th Annual Conference feedback via email.	Done

ACTION	PROGRESS
Clerk to formally accept the 2023 quotes for mowing and hedgecutting.	Done
Clerk to set up a Coronation reserve of £250.00.	Done
Clerk to organise for the 2023 meeting dates to be placed on the website, and advise WNC Councillors and other village representatives accordingly.	Done
Clerk to finalise 2023/24 budget and prepare 2023/24 precept request for January 2022 meeting.	Added to agenda
Clerk to respond to the bus network review.	Done
Clerk to add Climate Change policy discussion to the January 2023 agenda.	Added to agenda
Councillor Hodgetts to obtain details of the printing costs of the village newsletter.	The newsletter costs £515 to print (see 'Any Other Business')
The Clerk and Councillor Curtis to explore online storage options for parish archive material.	Ongoing

5. Roads and Transport

- **Speeding Statistics**

Councillor Fallon presented the SID statistics for December 2022, and noted that the current location of the SID seems to be helping to calm speeds.

- **Community Speedwatch 2023**

Councillor Fallon advised that East Farndon will participate in Community Speedwatch in possibly April 2023, and he will look for volunteers (minimum of five required).

ACTION: Councillor Fallon to find volunteers for Community Speedwatch 2023.

- **Speed Reduction Options**

Councillor Fallon reported that he is collating all statistics obtained to date, with a view to presenting the case for speed reduction measures to Highways. Various options were discussed. It was also noted that Councillor Fallon is meeting with Stuart Timmiss, Director of Place, Economy and Environment at WNC, on 25 January 2023 to look at the issues on road surfaces/road resurfacing within the parish, and he will also raise the issue of speed reduction options. Councillor Fallon will also liaise with Kier.

It was agreed that Councillor Fallon will set up a working group to formulate speed reduction proposals, for consideration by the Parish Council.

ACTION: Councillor Fallon to set up a working group to formulate speed reduction proposals for consideration by the Parish Council.

- **Retired Sewer and Road Drains on Harborough Road**

Councillor Fallon reported that Kier are due to investigate the collapsed drain next week.

A resident, in attendance, raised the following issues:

- The pavement on Back Lane is becoming overgrown with grass
- The hedge on Back Lane is over-hanging the pavement
- It appears the contractor vehicles associated with Orchard House are parking on Back Lane, blocking the pavement and churning up the grass verge
- The sewer trench re-instatements on Main Street are cracked
- The road on Main Street, outside Bramble Cottage, has a dip. It was noted that this has already been reported on Street Doctor and assessed by WNC as not dangerous

ACTION: Clerk to report on Street Doctor the issues regarding the pavement on Back Lane, the hedge on Back Lane, the trench re-instatements on Main Street and the dip on Main Street near Bramble Cottage.

ACTION: Clerk to investigate the issue of contractor parking on Back Lane.

Following multiple street doctor reports from East Farndon being automatically closed without investigation, WNC Councillor Irving-Swift to raise this issue with WNC and potentially take action in her role as Head of Audit.

6. Planning and Development

- **Applications granted**

WND/2022/0696 Demolition of stable block and storage building. Construction of detached dwelling, associated detached garage/home office and landscaping - Greenfields, Marston Lane, East Farndon, Northamptonshire, LE16 9SL
Approved on 23 November 2022, with thirteen conditions attached.

- **Applications for consideration – None**

- **Planning Application Communications with the Parish Council**

The Clerk reported that there had been a few issues regarding planning application communications, which had been raised with WNC Councillor Parker. Councillor Parker has provided information in response to most queries, but is waiting for further information that he was pass on when received.

7. Other Matters

- **Footpath Report**

The Clerk reported that Mr Alan Langley, the Footpath Warden, had provided the following:

- Towards the end of last year, a couple of reports I sent to Street Doctor were investigated and even acted on within a very short time. To see whether this signals a new dynamic approach, following the award of a new contract to Keir, I have re-reported two problems from a year or more ago to see whether these are dealt with promptly – or whether the recent brisk reaction was just a lucky blip.
- I am not aware of any new problems on our path network. Just the old ones.

- **Burial Ground Committee Report**

The Clerk reported that the Burial Ground is in good order. The path through the churchyard, as previously noted, would benefit from weeding and a top-up of gravel. Bryan Dunnill's grave had sunken substantially but has now been levelled. This will be checked again in February 2023. There are no dangerous memorials. The Noel West memorial, although slightly loose, cannot topple over. A push test of all memorials in the Burial Ground and Churchyard is scheduled for March 2023.

- **Tree Warden Report**

The Tree Wardens, Judy Hodgetts and Jessica Oakden, had provided an up-to-date TPO schedule, which has been circulated to all Councillors. Following contact with Michael Venton, all outstanding matters are in hand.

- **Police Liaison Representative & Neighbourhood Watch Report – nothing to report.**

- **Village Maintenance Tasks**

Councillor Beesley confirmed that everything is on schedule for the Village Spring Clean on 1 April 2023.

- **Update on Heritage Research Project**

Councillor Duke reported that Alan Langley and Judy Hodgetts have agreed to help collate a local heritage list. In the first instance, six items already researched will be submitted in the prescribed format to the Conservation Officer, for feedback.

- **War Memorial Renovation Working Group Report**

The Clerk reported that the Wine Tasting event had raised £700 and further cash donations had been received. The total raised so far is £4,620. Further events including a sponsored cycle ride on 14 May 2023 and a beer festival, possibly on the Coronation weekend.

- **Street Lighting Update**

Councillor Curtis reported that EON should be upgrading all of our 16 streetlights at the end of January/early February 2023. This will result in all streetlights being fitted with modern, warm LED lamps with part night photocells. All streetlights will be automatically switched off between midnight and 5.30am. This change will give us significant savings in terms of energy costs, vital to the ongoing control of our parish budget, and also be beneficial in terms of the environment and climate change.

ACTION: Councillor Curtis to publish details of the street lighting upgrade on the website.

A resident in attendance queried whether a health and safety audit had been undertaken for the dark night skies decision. WNC Councillor was of the opinion that this was not required and the Parish Council could make this decision (as have many other Parish Councils). It was agreed that the Parish Council would check the position.

ACTION: Councillor Curtis to ascertain whether a health and safety audit was necessary before a dark night skies policy was implemented.

The Clerk reported that the street light outside Farndon Hall is not working. The lighting maintenance contractor inspected the light in December 2022, and found it was due to a dead service, which National Grid advised they had fixed. However, the light is still not working so the contractor has raised this with their engineer.

ACTION: Clerk to liaise with the lighting maintenance contractor to ensure the street light outside Farndon Hall is fixed.

- **Climate Change Policy Discussion**

The Parish Council agreed it wanted to formulate a Climate Change Policy and in the first instance, it declared that there was a climate emergency (evidence from NALC that shows councils are more likely to act if they have made such a declaration).

ACTION: Clerk to produce appropriate policy suggestions for the March 2023 meeting, based on NALC information relating to the role of parish councils in combating climate change and helping the UK government achieve its net zero targets.

- **Burial Ground Freehold Registration**

The Clerk reported that the Burial Ground Land has now been registered in the Parish Council's name at Land Registry (title number NN382973). The applications in respect of the War Memorial and spring trough land are still being processed.

- **Trees in Memory of Queen Elizabeth II**

The Clerk reported that tree packs are available via the Woodland Trust, to plant in memory of Queen Elizabeth II. Applications are being taken now for delivery of trees in November 2023. In the absence of suitable communal land, it was agreed to ask villagers if they would like to plant trees in their gardens. If there is sufficient interest, the Parish Council will source trees from the Woodland Trust if possible.

ACTION: Councillor Curtis to publish a website article to ask villagers if they would like to plant trees in their gardens in memory of Queen Elizabeth II.

- **Churchyard Maintenance**

It was confirmed that the Parish Council is responsible for the maintenance of the trees and should arrange for regular inspection in exactly the same way as it would on property that it owns. If any tree is likely to cause damage, the Parish Council will have to undertake a risk assessment and, if necessary, contemplate the removal of the tree. The removal of the tree (as opposed to maintenance) requires the consent of the PCC as the tree, in law, belongs to them albeit that they have no maintenance responsibilities.

The Clerk reported that the horse chestnut tree in the churchyard had been inspected by an arboricultural consultant (at the cost of the neighbouring household), who advises that whilst not heavily decayed, the tree is infected; the consultant recommends that to reduce wind loading and potential failure, the tree should be reduced in height by three metres; lateral branches growing towards the neighbouring property should be reduced by three/four metres to suitable pruning points; and the tree should be re-tested in two years. The work cannot be undertaken until the Autumn due to nesting birds.

The Parish Council agreed that it should carry out this work. It was noted that the tree is subject to a TPO.

ACTION: Clerk to obtain quotes for recommended work on the TPO horse chestnut in the churchyard.

ACTION: Clerk to obtain permission from WNC Tree Warden for the recommended work on the TPO horse chestnut in the churchyard.

The Clerk reported that the Parish Council insurers had confirmed that if the Parish Council regularly inspect and maintain the trees in the churchyard, its current insurance covers the Parish Council for any damage arising from trees. However, the insurers had advised that the Parish Council has no insurable interest in the boundary walls; however, legal advice recently received seems to contradict this - on taking responsibility for the closed Churchyard, the Parish Council has also taken responsibility for the walls surrounding the Churchyard and is obliged to maintain them "in good repair" (Section 215 Local Government Act 1972). This statutory obligation gives the Parish Council an insurable interest and also liability for the state of the wall. As listed property, the Parish Council would have to apply for listed building consent for any work. This is the responsibility of the Parish Council and the PCC has no further interest in the maintenance of the walls.

The Parish Council is concerned that another tree is pushing out the church wall, and it was agreed to ask a local builder's opinion.

ACTION: Clerk to contact insurers to clarify insurance position on church boundary walls.

ACTION: Clerk to contact local builders to obtain an opinion on the state of the church boundary wall.

8. Finance

- **Bank Reconciliation (as at Close of Business on 16 January 2023)**

<u>Balance as at 1 November 2022</u>		
Current account	£6,783.06	
Deposit account	<u>£16,555.95</u>	£23,339.01
<u>Income</u>		
Interest	<u>£10.87</u>	£10.87

<u>Expenses</u>		
Yu Energy		£11.69
Yu Energy		£17.17
Yu Energy		£127.11
Jo Shaw		£45.94
NCALC		£2.00
Yu Energy		£11.38
Yu Energy		£17.23
Yu Energy		£141.97
EON Solutions		£56.17
C Burton		£689.20
Yu Energy		£11.79
Yu Energy		£18.68
Yu Energy		£161.95
		-
		£1,312.28
<u>Balance as at 16 January 2023</u>		
Current account		£5,470.78
Deposit account		£16,566.82
		£22,037.60

The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Councillor Pepler.

• **Actual v. Budgeted Spending as at 16 January 2023**

	Precept Agreed	Expenditure to Date	Balance
Streetlighting and Maintenance	£2,200.00	£1,784.95	£415.05
NCALC	£260.00	£254.21	£5.79
Insurance	£715.00	£680.39	£34.61
S137 Spending	£300.00	£144.37	£155.63
Training	£100.00	£85.00	£15.00
Mowing of Burial Ground/Hedges	£3,000.00	£2,472.75	£527.25
Clerk Gross Salary	£3,260.00	£2,885.25	£374.75
Parish Council/Clerk Expenses	£700.00	£599.85	£100.15
Bin Collection	£600.00	£600.00	£0.00
Defibrillator Expenses	£200.00	£135.00	£65.00
TOTAL	£11,335.00	£9,641.77	£1,693.23
Jubilee Expenses and Donations Covered by Jubilee Receipts		£2,925.48	
VAT		£792.20	
Payments from Reserves (see below)		£2,289.89	
TOTAL PAYMENTS		£15,649.34	

RESERVES		Expenditure	Receipts	Balance
Lighting Replacement	£3,000.00			£3,000.00
Renovation of Village Spring	£1,500.00			£1,500.00
Burial Ground/Churchyard Maintenance	£4,820.00	£1,250.00	£690.00	£4,260.00
Laptop purchase	£600.00	£414.99		£185.01
Bin purchase	£500.00	£624.90		-£124.90
War Memorial Maintenance	£900.00		£1,050.00	£1,950.00
Coronation	£250.00			£250.00

- **2023/24 Budget and Precept**

The Parish Council agreed the following budget for 2023/24:

Streetlighting and Maintenance	£1,480.00
NCALC	£280.00
Insurance	£715.00
S137 Spending	£600.00
Training	£100.00
Mowing of Burial Ground/Hedges	£3,000.00
Clerk Gross Salary	£3,650.00
Parish Council/Clerk Expenses	£700.00
Bin Collection	£630.00
Defibrillator Expenses	£200.00
Churchyard Maintenance	£600.00
TOTAL	£11,955.00

The Parish Council agreed the following reserves for 2023/24:

Renovation of Village Spring	£1,500.00
Burial Ground/Churchyard Maintenance	£4,260.00
War Memorial Maintenance	£1,950.00
Coronation	£250.00
General Reserve	£9,200.00

As the anticipated balance as at 31 March 2023 is necessary to keep for the agreed reserves, the Parish Council agreed that its precept request for 2022/23 is £11,955.

ACTION: Clerk to submit 2023/24 precept requirement and payment requisition form to WNC.

- **Fixed Asset Audit**

The Clerk and Councillor Fallon undertook a fixed asset audit on 14 January 2023. The suggested actions are the same as those identified at the July 2022 audit, which have been added to the Village maintenance list managed by Councillor Beesley. The only additional action is that the bin fixing on Harborough Road needs tightening.

- **Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2022/23 Accounts**

The Clerk confirmed that the current internal auditor, Ms P Greaves, has confirmed she is happy to continue. The Parish Council thanked Ms Greaves and agreed to her appointment as internal auditor for the 2022/23 accounts.

- **The following payments were agreed by all Councillors**

Payee	Reason	Amount	Chq no
Yu Energy	Electricity	£11.69	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£17.17	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£127.11	Direct Debit
Jo Shaw	Plants for Planters	£45.94	Online
NCALC	VAT	£2.00	Online
Yu Energy	Electricity	£11.38	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£17.23	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£141.97	Direct Debit
EON Solutions	Lighting Maintenance	£56.17	Online
Yu Energy	Electricity	£11.79	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£18.68	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£161.95	Direct Debit
Caroline Burton	December 2022/January 2023 Salary, plus Backdated Payrise for 2022	£689.20	Online

9. Correspondence

- A request for a donation has been received from the charity Home-Start Daventry and South Northants. Unfortunately, the Parish Council agreed is could not afford such a donation at the present time. It was noted that the Village Hall had recently supported a Home-Start fundraising event by offering a reduced hire fee.
- Annie Bailey, WNC Emergency Planning Officer has offered to train flood wardens and has offered help/advice in updating the Parish Council's emergency plan.
- All other relevant correspondence (e.g. NCALC Newsletter) has been circulated to Councillors and shared on the village website and Facebook page where appropriate.

10. Any Other Business

- Councillor Beesley requested two new planters for the village signs on Back Lane and Clipston Road.
ACTION: Councillor Curtis to make two new planters.
- It was agreed that as the WNC Town and Parish Monthly Briefing contains links to the WNC press briefings over the previous month, the Parish Council will routinely publish the monthly briefings on the website and only publish individual briefings if felt appropriate.
- The Clerk reported that following the discovery by Councillor Pepler of wooden panels left on Harborough Road, the Clerk had reported this as flytipping and they had been collected.
- On 22 December 2022, the government launched a consultation to explore how Local Planning Authorities can demonstrate local support and respond to views of their communities when considering onshore wind development in England. Under the proposals, planning permission would be dependent on a project being able to demonstrate local support and satisfactorily address any impacts identified by the local community. The consultation, which may result in changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, ends at 11.45pm on 2 March 2023. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy/levelling-up-and-regeneration-bill-reforms-to-national-planning-policy#chapter-8--onshore-wind-and-energy-efficiency>
ACTION: Councillor Curtis to publish a website article on the onshore wind development consultation.
- The PCC has requested a donation towards the cost of parish newsletter printing. The Parish Council agreed a donation of £100.00.
ACTION: Clerk to make a donation of £100 to the PCC towards the cost of parish newsletter printing.

11. Date of the next meeting – 15 March 2023
Provisional meeting date – 15 February 2023

12. Closure
The meeting closed at 9.40pm.

Signed that the Minutes are a true and accurate record

Chairman _____ **Dated** _____