

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

**WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER 2023 COMMENCING AT 7.15PM**

**PRESENT:** Mr B Fallon (Acting Chair), Ms S Beesley, Mr P Hodgetts, Mr T Knott  
Mrs C Burton (Clerk to the Parish Council)

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE** – WNC Councillor Irving-Swift

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**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received and accepted from Councillors Curtis, Pepler & Duke, and WNC Councillors Harris & Parker.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council on 19th July 2023**

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

**ACTION:** Clerk to arrange signing of July 2023 minutes by Councillor Curtis.

**4. Matters Arising**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
Clerk to continue work regarding placing a memorial bench in Hall Close field.	Done – added to agenda
Councillors Beesley and Knott to gather information from other Climate Action groups in nearby parishes, to inform possible future action.	Ongoing
Councillor Fallon to circulate link to the Speedwatch training video for volunteers.	Done
Councillor Fallon to submit speed reduction proposals to WNC Highways.	Added to agenda
Clerk to respond to planning applications 2023/5358/FULL Extensions at Windmill View and 2023/5994/FULL Pitched roof at Farndon Grange.	Done
Clerk to accept the quote for work on the TPO horse chestnut tree, and advise the PCC of the scheduled work.	Done – meeting held on 11 September 2023 with Michael Venton and tree surgeon to agree extent of works (which was condition of TPO approval); as a result, an amended quote of £1,480 (plus VAT) was received and approved via email by the Parish Council. Work is due to be completed on 26 September 2023.
Councillors Curtis and Duke, and the Clerk, to meet to discuss the village heritage work.	Done – added to agenda
Clerk to arrange for the revised lighting policy to be placed on the website.	Done
Councillor Curtis to scope proposals for Spring renovation work and possible costs.	Carried over
Clerk to notify the mower contractor of its arrangements for No Mow May.	Done
Councillor Curtis to discuss the fete with the PCC.	Done – the PCC are aware that there are volunteers available to assist in any fundraising activities for the upkeep of the church.

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
Clerk to circulate the presentations and the report from the Q&A session on LAPs.	Done
Clerk to close Coronation reserve and move balance to general reserves.	Done
The Clerk to register herself and Councillor Knott to attend the NCALC Annual Conference.	Done
Clerk to obtain the views of The Lealand residents regarding replacing The Lealand bench.	Done – added to agenda
Councillor Fallon to raise the issue of parking on pavements with WNC Highways.	Done – added to agenda

## 5. Roads and Transport

- **Community Speedwatch 2023**

Councillor Fallon reported that the parish had had the Speedwatch kit for four weeks, but was only able to use it for three weeks due to the weather. He is awaiting the official statistics, but estimates 96 speeding vehicles were caught over the three week period. He has asked for the kit again in November. He thanked all the volunteers, and the Parish Council thanked Councillor Fallon for managing the Speedwatch campaign.

- **Parking on Pavements**

Councillor Fallon reported that he had met with our local Police Officer, PC Chris Bates, to discuss the issue of parking on pavements in the village, plus on blind bends on Main Street. As a result, the local Police are now going to keep a close watch and will ticket vehicles if they are found to be parking in a way that obstructs pavements, on blind bends or in any other dangerous or inconsiderate manner. The Police will follow a two-step process:

Step 1 – a warning letter will be left on the offending vehicle(s).

Step 2 – repeat and continuous offences – Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued AND the vehicle will be removed (not one or the other).

This action has been publicised via the website, Facebook and notices in the village.

An assessment of the impact of the operation and whether further action is required will be undertaken in a couple of months.

Additionally, at the meeting:

- PC Bates suggested the Parish Council could ask for double yellows to be painted on the troublesome bends. However, the Parish Council was inclined to request white painted lines in sections to prevent parking but also to allow vehicles to take refuge from oncoming traffic.
- PC Bates witnessed first-hand how fast traffic is in the village and he stopped a few people. He has agreed to come out with his colleagues at random (and when the Parish Council ask) with the speed guns and actively target speeders – drivers will be pulled over and ticketed on the spot. This is in addition to the Safer Roads Team with the van.
- PC Bates feels the current SID is not colourful or bright enough to get drivers' attention, and the Parish Council should consider replacing it.
- PC Bates fully supports the traffic calming proposals (moving the gateway towards Harborough, reducing carriageway (give way chicane) and speed limit of the strip to Harborough), and feels the Parish Council should push for 40mph on the strip and 20mph after that.

- **Road Issues and Speed Reduction Proposals**

The Clerk reported that WNC Harris visited East Farndon with the officer responsible for monitoring highway repairs. As a result, a number of repairs to Main Street and the junction at Lubenham Lane are scheduled to be completed in October.

Councillor Fallon reported that he is meeting with Helen Howard next week to discuss the speed reduction proposals.

**ACTION: Councillor Fallon to meet with Helen Howard to agree feasibility and way forward for speed reduction measures.**

## 6. Planning and Development

- **Applications granted**

2023/5456/FULL Proposed Loft Conversion - 18 The Lealand East Farndon West Northamptonshire LE16 9SQ. This application was approved on 12 July 2023.

- **Applications Withdrawn**

2023/5994/FULL The proposed work consists of changing a single storey roof structure from a hipped roof to a pitched roof. The roof will be increased in height whilst integrating dormer windows to accommodate bedrooms and en suites - Farndon Grange Marston Lane East Farndon West Northamptonshire LE16 9SL. This application was withdrawn on 30 August 2023.

- **Applications for Consideration - None**

It was also noted that all councils in Leicestershire have been asked to sign-up to a 'Statement of Common Ground' as the Leicester City Council says there is a lack of suitable land available to meet its own housing target. For Harborough district, it would mean over 1,500 extra houses going up over the next 13 years, in addition to the area's own housing target. HDC were due to decide whether to accept the extra houses on 18 September 2023, but following representation from the area's three MPs, who say there is no legal requirement for such a measure, it has been put back until November. Additionally, over 2,000 people have signed a petition launched by Harborough MP Neil O'Brien, urging HDC not to accept the housing; this has been advertised on East Farndon's website and Facebook, as any increase in HDC's housing target may increase the chances of a call on the use of the land situated in the East Farndon parish (as identified in the Spatial Options Review).

**ACTION: Clerk to contact MP Chris Heaton-Harris to advise of the possible increase in HDC housing allocation and to ask him to support the petition.**

## 7. Other Matters

- **Footpath Report**

The Clerk reported that Mr Alan Langley had stepped down as Footpath Warden, and had been replaced by Jonny Dargie on 1 September 2023. The Parish Council extended its thanks to Alan Langley for his long service as Footpath Warden, and its thanks to Jonny Dargie to taking over this role.

**ACTION: Clerk to organise a gift of thanks for Alan Langley.**

The Clerk provided the following report from Jonny Dargie:

- Handover of role: A comprehensive handover of the warden role from Alan Langley has been completed. All footpaths and bridleways have been visited and relevant documentation transferred, including training on the WNC "Fix My Street" portal that is used to report issues to the subcontractors.
- ROW path access/signage: All footpath or bridleway signs on the East Farndon parish ROW network have either been touched up with a sharpie pen if faded or have been replaced if damaged or missing.
- Where foliage was obscuring access or signage this has been removed. As a result, the network is in good condition, with the exception of the below on-going matters which require council contractor input.
- Structural issues: There are no new structural issues which the committee have not previously been made aware of. Main outstanding matters, all of which have been reported to the Council contractors and are pending investigation and/or action:
  - 1). Wonky bridge: on the furthest most point of CP5 with the parish boundary the bridge at this location needs one of the three pieces of wood to be replaced or repositioned.
  - 2). Knocked down finger post: where CP3 joins the Marston Road (near The Dales) the finger post had been knocked down and placed into the ditch by the road. The finger post has been retrieved and laid on the side of the road so the contractors can clearly find it.
  - 3). Field obstructions: CP1 and CP3 paths are through fields which have recently been ploughed and are difficult to navigate.

- 4). Wobbly stile: at the first stile on CP3 between Marston Road and the intersection with CP5 the stile is wobbly and dangerous.
- 5). Village Hall path: is regularly overgrown and also becomes very slippery in wet conditions – ideally would have steps put in place at the steepest point approximately half way up.
- 6). Difficult stile: at the top end of CP6 the stile at the top of the hill is a “V” shaped design and there is a steep drop down which is difficult to pass through – ideally would be replaced with a more traditional design.

- **Burial Ground Committee Report**

The Clerk reported that the Burial Ground is in good order. The Burial Ground Committee will meet in October to carry out a general inspection and any levelling needed. The Committee would welcome any advice on ways to keep the Burial Ground Extension unkempt to support wildlife, but manageable.

- **Tree Warden Report**

An up-to-date TPO tree schedule has been circulated to all Councillors. The points to note are:

- Horse Chestnut in the graveyard: Pruning agreed by WNC - work to take place on 26 September (as previously reported)
- Field opposite The Manor: Michael Venton is to chase up re planting, following the demise of the Ash in the field
- 2 Rectory Court: The homeowner has asked to liaise directly with Michael Venton regarding replanting following the loss of two oaks
- The Limes: Report sent to Street Doctor regarding the overhanging branches on Back Lane, and also reported a pine that looks as if it is dying and could cause a potential issue

- **Police Liaison Representative & Neighbourhood Watch Report**

Nothing to report.

- **Memorial Bench in Hall Close Field**

The Clerk reported that the bench in memory of Mark Ellis, kindly donated by Sue Ellis has now been sited. Sue Ellis requested that the following is recorded:

*I would like to thank Caroline personally for all her work towards the successful placement of the bench I have donated to the Parish. I was grateful to John Smith who put it together and was helped by another friend Tim Thomas lifting into position. My husband Mark loved living here in East Farndon, the walks, the village hall events and the community spirit. Please pass on my thanks to all on the Council for the permission and support over this, as you can imagine myself, family and friends need a quiet space to remember Mark. I will of course thank Tom and Alice Joule in person for allowing the bench in their field. The bench will weather as oak does so hopefully will last many years.*

The Clerk confirmed that the bench has been added to the Fixed Asset Register, and so the bench will be regularly checked (including the ground on which it sits, which is a condition of the Scheduled Monument Consent).

- **Village Heritage Information**

The Clerk reported that herself and Councillors Curtis & Duke had met to discuss the ongoing heritage work. The Parish Council agreed that it should develop a village story, including the various heritage assets information, which would be useful in informing responses to planning applications.

**ACTION: Councillor Curtis and Clerk to develop a village story, covering heritage information, for the website.**

- **The Lealand Bench**

The Clerk reported that following feedback from Lealand residents, it was felt that the bench should remain. Councillor Fallon reported that he had obtained a quote to replace the unsafe slats for no more than £250. The Parish Council agreed to accept the quote.

**ACTION: Councillor Fallon to organise for replacement of the slats on The Lealand bench.**

- **War Memorial Working Group Update**

The Clerk reported that Councillor Knott has taken over as Chair of the Working Group. The building work on the War Memorial is due to be finished shortly, and then planting will be undertaken before Remembrance Day. The planned replanting includes two larger stone planters, and Jo Shaw has kindly agreed to maintain the planters (she currently maintains the planters at the entrance to the village). The Parish Council agreed that it would meet the ongoing costs involved in this.

The Working Group has also found a stonemason to clean the WW2 stone plaque at the church, and a blacksmith to renovate the WW2 memorial church gates.

- **The Spring Trough Land Freehold Registration**

The Clerk reported that the land on which the Spring trough sits is now registered in the Parish Council's name, and has been added to the Fixed Asset register.

- **Fixed Asset Audit**

The Clerk reported that herself and Councillor Knott completed a fixed asset audit on 22 August 2023. The points to note are as follows:

- The tree at the entrance of Home Farm Close needs cutting back, as the streetlight there is almost engulfed by the tree. The Clerk has made enquiries to ascertain who owns the tree (it does not appear to fall under any of the Land Registry parcels) and is awaiting advice from Michael Venton. WNC Irving-Swift will make enquiries about who can prune a tree on unregistered land.

**ACTION: Councillor Hodgetts to report the tree at the entrance of Home Farm Close on Street Doctor.**

- The insurance value of the War Memorial (£36,000) needs increasing.  
**ACTION: Councillor Knott to obtain a rebuild cost of the War Memorial for insurance purposes.**
- The bus shelter needs attention. The soil behind needs lowering, weeds removed, remedial repairs and creosoting.
- The village hall bin needs repainting.
- The village hall bench needs some concrete and general maintenance.
- The Lealand bench needs mending (see above).
- The Lubenham Road bench needs weeds removing around it, and repainting. It was agreed that this bench should be a Pride bench, painted in rainbow colours.

**ACTION: Councillor Beesley to organise work on the bus shelter, village hall bench and bin, and Lubenham Road bench.**

- **Damaged Beech Tree Plaque**

The Clerk reported that the beech tree plaque has been damaged and needs replacing.

**ACTION: Councillor Hodgetts to check whether a plaque could be placed on the beech tree.**

**ACTION: Clerk to organise for a replacement beech tree metal plaque.**

## 8. Finance

- **Bank Reconciliation (as at Close of Business on 18 September 2023)**

<u>Balance as at 16 July 2023</u>		
Current account	£8,582.69	
Deposit account	£16,624.87	
		£25,207.56
<u>Income</u>		
Interest	£27.84	
		£27.84

20/23

<u>Expenses</u>			
Marc Simons		£885.00	
Yu Energy		£47.87	
Yu Energy		£11.02	
Yu Energy		£12.36	
C Burton		£529.20	
S Beesley		£67.89	
Yu Energy		£11.02	
Yu Energy		£47.16	
Yu Energy		£12.36	
West Northants Norse		£760.32	
The Doodle Cloud		£216.00	
			-£2,600.20
<u>Balance as at 18 September 2023</u>			
Current account		£5,982.49	
Deposit account		£16,652.71	
			£22,635.20

The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Councillor Knott.

- **Actual v. Budgeted Spending (as at 18 September 2023)**

	Precept Agreed	Expenditure to Date	Balance
Streetlighting and Maintenance	£1,480.00	£513.60	£966.40
NCALC	£280.00	£283.32	-£3.32
Insurance	£715.00	£697.02	£17.98
S137 Spending	£600.00	£190.09	£409.91
Training	£100.00		£100.00
Mowing of Burial Ground/Hedges	£3,000.00	£1,315.82	£1,684.18
Clerk Gross Salary	£3,650.00	£1,903.14	£1,746.86
Parish Council/Clerk Expenses	£700.00	£687.49	£12.51
Bin Collection	£630.00	£633.60	-£3.60
Defibrillator Expenses	£200.00	£135.00	£65.00
Churchyard Maintenance	£600.00		£600.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,955.00</b>	<b>£6,359.08</b>	<b>£5,595.92</b>
Spending from Reserves (see below)		£4,108.08	
VAT		£1,055.65	
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		<b>£11,522.81</b>	

RESERVES		Receipts	Payments	Balance
Lighting Replacement	£3,000.00		£3,986.28	Closed
Renovation of Village Spring	£1,500.00			£1,500.00
Burial Ground/Churchyard Maintenance Work	£4,260.00			£4,260.00
War Memorial Maintenance	£1,950.00	£6,540.50		£8,490.50
Coronation	£250.00		£121.80	Closed

- **Parish Council Debit Card**

The Parish Council resolved to apply for a bank debit card, to sit with the Clerk.

**ACTION: Clerk to apply for a bank debit card.**

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

Payee	Reason	Amount	Chq No.
Marc Simons	Mowing	£885.00	Online
Yu Energy	Electricity	£47.87	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£11.02	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£12.36	Direct Debit
C Burton	August/September 2023 salary and expenses	£529.20	Online
S Beesley	Litter pick expenses	£67.89	Online
Yu Energy	Electricity	£11.02	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£47.16	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£12.36	Direct Debit
West Northants Norse	Bin collection fees	£760.32	Online
The Doodle Cloud	Website Hosting Fees	216.00	Online

**9. Correspondence**

- WNC wrote to all parishes about the forthcoming Community Governance Review (CGR), and had NCALC had given reasons why parishes may wish to be involved. The Parish Council had considered this by email and decided it was not necessary to be involved.
- The Boundary Commission has published its final recommendations, proposing that West Northamptonshire should have 76 councillors; West Northamptonshire should have 35 wards; the boundaries of all of the existing wards should change; and those councillors should represent 13 three-councillor wards, 15 two-councillor ward and seven single-councillor wards across the council area. As a result, East Farndon will be part of the Rural North West ward, with a single WNC Councillor.
- The English Regional Transport Association will be holding a meeting in Northampton on the 30 September 2023, at Quaker House, Wellington Street, Northampton (2pm to 4pm), with a discussion due to take place on the re-opening of the Northampton to Market Harborough railway line. This has been posted on the website.
- 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**

- WNC Councillor Irving-Swift highlighted that free newspapers and magazines are available via WNC's PressReader (with virtual library membership).  
**ACTION: Clerk to organise a website article about virtual library membership.**
- The Clerk reported that a resident had raised the issue of hedges that need cutting – the hedge on Main Street at Home Farm, and the hedge to the right of Spring Cottage.  
**ACTION: Councillor Fallon to report hedges at Home Farm and Spring Cottage on Street Doctor.**
- Councillor Fallon had collated the SID statistics for the last two months, which show that there were 85,318 total vehicles, with 72,320 exceeding the speed limit; the 85th percentile was 35.5 mph and the highest speed was 80 mph.

**11. Date of the next meeting – 15 November 2023**

Provisional meeting date – 18 October 2023

**12. Closure**

The meeting closed at 8.26pm.

**Signed that the Minutes are a true and accurate record**

Chairman \_\_\_\_\_

Dated \_\_\_\_\_

22/23