

# EAST FARDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AT THE VILLAGE HALL

## GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 17TH JANUARY 2024 COMMENCING AT 7.15PM

**PRESENT:** Mr M Curtis (Chair), Ms M Duke, Mr P Hodgetts, Ms E Pepler, Mr B Fallon, Mr T Knott  
Mrs C Burton (Clerk to the Parish Council)

**OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:** WNC Councillor Parker

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### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Councillor Beesley, and WNC Councillor Harris.

### 2. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

None.

### 3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Parish Council on 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023

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

### 4. Matters Arising

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>PROGRESS</b>
Councillors Beesley and Knott to gather information from other Climate Action groups in nearby parishes, to inform possible future action.	Carried over
Councillor Curtis to scope proposals for Spring renovation work and possible costs.	Carried over
Councillor Fallon to meet with Helen Howard to agree feasibility and way forward for speed reduction measures.	Done – see ‘Speed Reduction Update’ agenda item.
Councillor Curtis and Clerk to develop a village story, covering heritage information, for the website.	Carried over
Councillor Beesley to organise work on the bus shelter and village hall bin.	Bus shelter complete. Village Hall bin renovation ongoing.
Clerk to confirm with Mr Dargie whether the RoW website material is sufficient, to be flagged up via a newsletter article.	Done – website material sufficient.
Councillor Hodgetts to obtain advice on wild flower planting in the Burial Ground Extension.	Carried over
Councillor Curtis to organise the removal of the old and installation of the new Village Hall bench.	Done. The work was kindly undertaken by Phil Cooper of BRM at no fee. <b>ACTION: Clerk to arrange a gift for Phil Cooper (BRM)</b>
Councillor Beesley to organise renovation of the Lubenham Road bench, subject to Parish Council agreement to costs.	Artwork ideas are being developed and will be sent to PC for sign off. Due to the weather, work will not start until the spring.
Clerk to add Village signage to the January 2024 agenda.	Done – added at agenda
Clerk to formally accept the 2024 quotes for mowing and hedgecutting.	Done
Clerk to organise for the 2024 meeting dates to be placed on the website, and advise WNC Councillors and other village representatives accordingly.	Done

ACTION	PROGRESS
Clerk to increase the insurance cover for the War Memorial and Street Furniture.	Done
Clerk to finalise 2024/25 budget and prepare 2024/25 precept request for January 2024 meeting.	Done – added to agenda
Councillors Curtis and Beesley to register for the WNC Planning Briefing.	Done – added to agenda

## 5. Roads and Transport

- **Speeding Reduction Update**

Councillor Fallon provided the SID statistics for 15 November 2023 to today, which showed:

- 81,245 vehicles had passed down Harborough Road
- The 85% percentile speed was 34.6mph, with 69,058 vehicles exceeding the 30 mph
- The peak speeding time is 3-4am on Saturday mornings

Councillor Fallon reported that he had met with Helen Howard (Highways), and the following action was agreed in principle:

1. Firstly, a 40mph speed limit between the parish and the Harborough border should be requested
2. The gateway to the village on Harborough Road should be moved further out (precise location to be agreed)
3. The village signs on Harborough Road should be replaced, plus the repainting of the 30 mph signs on the road, with painting of dragon's teeth
4. Physical traffic calming measures to be considered

It was also agreed that the path between the parish and the Harborough border should be widened towards the ditch, for pedestrian safety and because it is a cycle path (and is currently too narrow).

As regards the VAS, Ms Howard advised that this possibly could be replaced by a 2-way SID by WNC, on the condition that the Parish Council pays for its maintenance (cost currently unknown); the Parish Council should liaise with Steve Barber (Highways).

**ACTION: Councillor Fallon to progress agreed speed reduction measures.**

Councillor Fallon advised that East Farndon will participate in Community Speedwatch in 2024. He has also asked for the mobile speed van to visit the parish at weekends.

## 6. Planning and Development

- **Applications granted**

2023/7855/TPO Work to tree subject to tree preservation order - Glebeland 1 Rectory Court East Farndon LE16 9SU

The Parish Council considered this application via email, and had no objections, and the application was approved on 8 January 2024.

- **Applications for consideration – None**

It was also noted that HDC has opened four public consultations regarding strategic and local planning:

- Issues and Options (Regulation 18)
- Call for Sites 2024
- Great Easton Conservation Area Appraisal
- Local List on Non-Designated Heritage Assets (proposed additions)

All four consultations are open for six weeks; the deadline for comments is 23:55hrs on Tuesday 27 February 2024.

**ACTION: The Parish Council to consider whether it needs to respond to the initial consultation on HDC's Local Plan, based on advice from WNC Councillor Parker.**

## 7. Other Matters

- **Footpath Report**

The Clerk reported that Mr Jonny Dargie, the Footpath Warden, had provided an update on all matters previously reported with detail of the issue, on site pictures and an update on status (outstanding versus resolved), which had been circulated to Councillors. He also provided the following:

- Structural issues: There has been some good news to report since the November update, as several issues previously reported have been resolved by the council contractors (Kier). New issues noted and/or reported to the Council since November update:
  - Path from Main Street up to Back Lane: fallen tree trunk partially blocking route and needs to be removed (now done).
  - Gate on route from top of village down the valley behind the church: approximately halfway down the footpath gate to the side of the main field gate has degraded and does not close properly without lifting on to the lock – needs replacing.
- Inspection of the full East Farndon ROW network completed with Kier (council contractor): As noted in the November update, there are 61 parishes in the West Northants region of the county of which East Farndon is one; each parish is supposed to have all its Rights of Way routes (footpaths and bridleways) fully inspected every 3-5 years. East Farndon Parish has x10 ROW routes covering 11.97km. East Farndon needed to be fully inspected by the end of 2023. Over a couple of weekends during November 2023, I joined Angela Davies (Kier representative) for her full inspection – key points:
  - The full ROW network was walked and reviewed – all existing structural issues were assessed and remedial action was agreed.
  - Additional issues were recorded and added to the list (highlighted as “NEW” on list).
  - The state of the route behind the village hall was discussed in detail and Kier are optimistic that remedial action will be scheduled for completion in Spring 2024. However, it was noted that the path borders a number of different land and home owners so coordinating access may not be straightforward.

**ACTION: Councillor Pepler to report other known blocked footpaths to Mr Dargie, and to enquire about dog-friendly access to footpaths.**

- **Burial Ground Committee Report**

The Clerk reported that the Burial Ground is in good order. The same comments and proposed actions still stand as per the report in November 2023. The burial of Marlene Hook took place today.

- **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.

- **Police Liaison Representative & Neighbourhood Watch Report** – No report.

- **Village Signage**

It was agreed to carry forward this agenda item.

**ACTION: Clerk to add Village signage to the March 2024 agenda.**

- **Feedback from the WNC Planning Briefing**

Councillor Curtis had attended the briefing on 30 November 2023. It focussed on the integration of the three planning teams into one. WNC now have just over 100 people in Planning, but still have 27 vacancies. Apparently service levels have improved to 80% of on time responses from 60% before the change. There will be more briefings in the future, including a session to help Clerks draft responses to planning applications for maximum impact.

After the session, Danny Moody (NCALC) stayed online to take additional questions from the Parish Councils. Councillor Curtis took the opportunity to ask about Neighbourhood plans, and Mr Moody's opinion was clear that he would not advise one for East Farndon, because a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is not designed to be a prevention tool against housing growth; it is more of a tool for a village to set out its strategy on how it wants to be. If the parish is planning for housing growth then the NP is a good tool for helping to direct where that new housing will go, how it will look, etc. The NP carries some weight but it cannot prevent the bigger strategic developments from taking place. Also, most small villages (including East Farndon) are already limited to in-fill developments within the village confines. A few Parish Councillors then weighed in, with some saying it was good, but everyone saying how much work it is (Nether Heyford spent £20k and it took them 7 years). One said that there are two parts to the NP - the strategic village scene and the planning part; it is the planning part that carries all of the legal baggage, i.e. conforming to WNC planning policies, has to be adopted, etc.

It was agreed that this all fits in with the Parish Council's current approach to develop its strategic story, which is based on heritage assets, etc., but not complete a NP.

It was also noted that a new WNC local plan development starts shortly, which the Parish Council will monitor.

- **Biodiversity Duty (to consider what the Council can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the area)**

The Clerk reported that NCALC had advised that Government guidance issued in May 2023 suggested that "councils" would have a new duty to consider what they can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity, and that the first consideration should be made by 1 January 2024. NCALC only received confirmation in December 2023 that the duty includes parish and town councils. The Parish Council needs to:

- Consider what it can do to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on this consideration.
- Act to deliver the policies and achieve the objectives.

Town and parish councils, unlike other authorities, are not obliged to publish a report on their actions, but the Government guidance requires all public authorities to complete their first consideration of what action to take for biodiversity by 1 January 2024. They must agree their policies and objectives as soon as possible after this and must reconsider the selected actions within five years of completing their previous consideration, or more frequently if they choose. There is a model policy and action plan available at:

<https://www.northantscalc.com/blog/news-1/model-biodiversity-policy-2023-61>.

**ACTION: Clerk to draft a biodiversity policy and action plan.**

- **80th Anniversary of D-Day Event on 6 June 2024**

This is an event planned at the Village Hall, with a fish & chip supper (already ordered). It was agreed that the Parish Council will run this event, co-ordinated by Councillors Curtis and Hodgetts.

**ACTION: Councillors Curtis and Hodgetts to co-ordinate the D-Day Event on 6 June 2024.**

- **Arrangements for the Annual Meeting of the Parish**

It was agreed that this would be held in the same format as previous years, to be held on 20 March 2024 prior to a meeting of the Parish Council.

- **Church Fete**

The PCC have not yet decided whether it will run a fete this year.

**ACTION: Councillor Hodgetts to liaise with the PCC for a decision on the Church fete.**

- **War Memorial Renovation Update**

Clerk reported that the War Memorial and Church WW2 gates renovation has been completed, and all bills settled. The Working Group will consider its next steps and report to the Parish Council in due course.

- **Parking on the Church Path**

Councillor Duke raised the issue of cars parking on the path to the church, as obviously people need access to the churchyard and the public footpath; the grass on the left is quite steep and has a few obstacles so it is quite hard to get past a car. It was noted that perhaps the problem should get less frequent when building work has finished but Councillor Duke noted that the issue happened before that work started.

**ACTION: Councillor Duke to advise the PCC and the footpath warden about cars parking on the path to the church.**

## 8. Finance

- **Bank Reconciliation (as at Close of Business on 15 January 2024)**

<u>Balance as at 10 November 2023</u>		
Current account	£6,980.79	
Deposit account	<u>£16,686.44</u>	
		£23,667.23
<u>Income</u>		
Interest	<u>£26.66</u>	
		£26.66
<u>Expenses</u>		
Smith Building Contractors	£5,000.00	
Clear Insurance	£103.80	
J Shaw	£64.30	
Yu Energy	£10.67	
Yu Energy	£59.79	
Yu Energy	£12.04	
S Beesley	£48.06	
EON Solutions	£38.40	
Geosphere Ltd	£28.00	
The Doodle Cloud	£216.00	
Yu Energy	£12.50	
Yu Energy	£11.02	
Yu Energy	<u>£62.70</u>	
		-£5,667.28
<u>Balance as at 15 January 2024</u>		
Current account	£6,313.51	
Deposit account	<u>£11,713.10</u>	
		£18,026.61

The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Councillor Knott.

- **Actual v. Budgeted Spending as at 15 January 2024**

	<b>Precept Agreed</b>	<b>Expenditure to Date</b>	<b>Balance</b>
Streetlighting and Maintenance	£1,480.00	£927.52	£552.48
NCALC	£280.00	£283.32	-£3.32
Insurance	£715.00	£800.82	-£85.82
S137 Spending	£600.00	£380.44	£219.56
Training	£100.00	£48.00	£52.00
Mowing of Burial Ground/Hedges	£3,000.00	£2,595.82	£404.18
Clerk Gross Salary	£3,650.00	£2,412.34	£1,237.66
Parish Council/Clerk Expenses	£700.00	£703.11	-£3.11
Bin Collection	£630.00	£633.60	-£3.60
Defibrillator Expenses	£200.00	£135.00	£65.00
Churchyard Maintenance	£600.00	£600.00	£0.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£11,955.00</b>	<b>£9,519.97</b>	<b>£2,435.03</b>
Spending from Reserves (see below)		£11,065.75	
VAT		£1,584.11	
<b>TOTAL PAYMENTS</b>		<b>£22,169.83</b>	

<b>RESERVES</b>		<b>Receipts</b>	<b>Payments</b>	<b>Balance</b>
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		£880.00	£3,380.00
War Memorial Maintenance	£1,950.00	£6,540.50	£5,000.00	£3,490.50
Coronation	£250.00		£121.80	Closed
Fixed Asset Spending	£2,000.00		£1,077.67	£922.33

- **2024/25 Budget and Precept**

The Parish Council agreed the following budget for 2024/25:

Streetlighting and Maintenance	£1,400.00
NCALC	£300.00
Insurance	£1,000.00
S137 Spending	£660.00
Training	£100.00
Mowing of Burial Ground/Hedges	£4,000.00
Clerk Gross Salary	£3,995.00
Parish Council/Clerk Expenses	£815.00
Bin Collection	£665.00
Defibrillator Expenses	£200.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£13,135.00</b>

The Parish Council agreed the following reserves for 2024/25:

Renovation of Village Spring	£1,500.00
Burial Ground/Churchyard Maintenance	£3,380.00
War Memorial Maintenance	£3,490.50
Fixed Asset Spending	£1,000.00
General Reserve (forecast, including VAT refund due)	8,000.00

As the anticipated balance as at 31 March 2024 is necessary to keep for the agreed reserves, the Parish Council agreed that its precept request for 2024/25 is £13,135.

**ACTION: Clerk to submit 2024/25 precept requirement and payment requisition form to WNC.**

- **Fixed Asset Audit**

It was agreed that a fixed asset audit every six months was not necessary, and that it should be carried out annually, unless any issues arise. The next fixed asset audit is due in July 2024, to be undertaken by Councillors Knott and Duke.

**ACTION: Clerk to update the Risk Assessment to reflect an annual fixed asset audit.**

- **Appointment of Internal Auditor for 2023/24 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 2023/24 accounts.

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

Payee	Reason	Amount	Chq no
Smith Building Contractors	War Memorial Renovation	£5,000.00	Online
Clear Insurance	Insurance Premium for Revalued Assets	103.80	Online
J Shaw	Plants for planters	£64.30	Online
Yu Energy	Electricity	£10.67	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£59.79	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£12.04	Direct Debit
S Beesley	Bulbs and gravel	£48.06	Online
EON Solutions	Lighting Maintenance	£38.40	Online
Geosphere Ltd	Parish Online subscription	£28.00	Online
The Doodle Cloud	Webhosting Fees	£216.00	Online
Yu Energy	Electricity	£12.50	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£11.02	Direct Debit
Yu Energy	Electricity	£62.70	Direct Debit

## 9. Correspondence

- Following East Midlands Airport's Stage 2 ACP submission, CAA have given approval for progression to Stage 3 of the airspace change process. Councillor Fallon has kindly agreed to lead on this on behalf of the Parish Council, and will be attending briefing sessions. Councillor Fallon advised that East Midlands Airport is seeking to begin the process of updating its airspace. In summary, any aircraft on the approach to, or departing from East Midlands airport could potentially be allowed to fly at or below 7000ft in future anywhere in the area identified. East Farndon is within that area and it is a reduction in the Lower Airspace Limit, which is about 10,000ft now. There will be a knock-on effect as air traffic to/from Nottingham and Birmingham will also pass through this area which means that aircraft noise could increase considerably, particularly with departing aircraft and the frequency of aircraft flying overhead (both landing and departing) increasing too.

Councillor Fallon thinks that it may be noticeable and will mean people should expect to see commercial aircraft a lot lower in the future and more frequently if these proposals are implemented. If, after the event, it becomes a nuisance, we could apply to have a noise abatement area established here which could stipulate that aircraft are not to fly lower than 7,000ft overhead after 7pm if departing, for example.

- A complaint had been received regarding the parking of contractor vehicles near Orchard House. Councillor Curtis had spoken to the relevant person, who advised they will ask contractors to avoid parking on blind bends and make sure they leave passing spaces; they also advised that the building work was nearing completion.
- 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 - None**

**11. Date of the next meeting** – 20 March 2024  
Provisional meeting date – 21 February 2024

**12. Closure**  
The meeting closed at 8.55pm.

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

**Chairman** \_\_\_\_\_

**Dated** \_\_\_\_\_