

**EAST FARDON PARISH COUNCIL MEETING AT THE VILLAGE HALL
GENERAL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL
TUESDAY 9TH JULY 2019 COMMENCING AT 7.45PM**

PRESENT: Mr. R West (Chair), Mr. R Burton, Mr. P Hodgetts, Mr. M Curtis
Mrs. C Burton (Clerk to the Parish Council)

OTHER RESIDENTS IN ATTENDANCE – one

38. Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Councillors Prew, Crifo and Cooper.

39. Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no Declarations of Interest.

40. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting 11th June 2019

The Minutes of the above meetings were agreed by all Councillors and signed by the Chair.

41. 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 to after Community Speedwatch
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
Councillor Burton to ask for a volunteer Tree Warden in the newsletter and Facebook.	Done – item added to agenda
Clerk to draft a Planning Response policy for the July 2019 meeting.	Done – item added to agenda
Councillor Curtis is to inspect the churchyard with Mr Green, and will advise the Clerk on the action to be taken.	Done – item added to agenda
Clerk to write to Highways to raise the issue of blocked drains in the village.	Done – item added to agenda
Clerk to request replacement of lantern at Church Cottage	Done – lantern replaced
Clerk to chase Highways on how to upgrade HGV signage on Lubenham Road.	Done – item added to agenda
Clerk to notify DDC that it has no objection to Application DA/2019/0306, subject to the issue of the access road not being included in the application.	Done

42. Road and Transport

- Speeding Update

Councillor Burton reported that six volunteers attended a Community Speedwatch (CSW)

training session in Northampton on 15 June 2019, and CSW is currently being undertaken along Main Street and Harbrough Road. Also, there have been visits from the Police Enforcement van. A more detailed report on the outcome will be given when known.

43. Planning and Development

Applications granted - None

Applications for consideration

DA/2019/0511 Variation of Condition 2 of application DA/2016/1070 to revise plans and elevations to omit swimming pool - Robin Hill, 2, Clipston Road, East Farndon, Northamptonshire, LE16 9SN. The Parish Council had no objections.

ACTION: Clerk to advise DDC that the Parish Council has no objections to Application DA/2019/0511.

44. Other Matters

- **Footpath Report**

The Clerk read out a report from Mr A Langley (Footpath Warden) as follows:

- Over the eleven years since I became Footpath Warden in succession to the late Dick Myrton, the role has seen a steep decline. Contact with Rights-of-Way Officers, bulletins about work carried out round the county, occasional meetings for Wardens to meet the Officers – all that has gone. The whole operation of maintaining the footpath network was moved from the County to a contractor, who then also employed the Officers. The most recent setback was when the Officers were reduced to three, thus giving each officer around 100 parishes to look after. Footpath Wardens became a forgotten species, only able to communicate with the contractor on the same basis as any member of the public.
- So I was delighted when all of a sudden an interest was taken and just last month Parish Councils were asked who their Warden was so that a register could be compiled. Actually I've been here all the time, but it shows that they really had no idea. Most parishes have a Warden and as I see it, they constitute an army of volunteers doing their best to keep paths viable. Surely a resource worth cultivating. We'll see if this new approach lasts or whether the contractors will get fed up with us complaining about the paths.
- In Farndon I have been round some of the paths with a pair of secateurs, cutting back brambles and hawthorn from round some of the stiles and gates so it's possible to get through unscathed. I would urge anyone walking on our paths sometimes to take secateurs with them and help to make the paths that bit easier to use.
- Having recently been on a walk in another part of the county, I can say that, in comparison, our paths are not at all bad for the most part.

- **Burial Ground Committee** – no report

- **Neighbourhood Watch** – no report

- **Local Government Reform (LGR)**

The Clerk advised that in June, the principal councils published "Prospectus For Change: An integrated plan for Local Government Reform and Transformation in Northamptonshire":

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/council-and-democracy/transparency/Pages/unitary-councils.aspx>.

NCALC advised that it is not clear who the document is aimed at or why it was published, and that it is full of local government gobbledegook, and it is light on detail (although very complicated) so it leaves a lot of questions unanswered. However, it is an important document and it gives an insight into the scale of the LGR programme.

- **Tree Warden**

The Clerk reported that Jessica Oakden and Judy Hodgetts had volunteered to jointly undertake the role of Tree Warden for the Parish. The Parish Council thanked them and agreed to appoint them to the role.

ACTION: Clerk to meet with Tree Wardens to discuss the quarterly tree inspection, reporting arrangements and provide information on the TPOs in the Parish.

- **Planning Response 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 Planning Response policy on the website.

- **Transfer of Churchyard**

Following receipt from the PCC of the Notice of intention to apply to transfer maintenance responsibility to the Parish Council, Councillors Curtis and Hodgetts undertook an inspection of the churchyard with the Church Warden, Richard Green. They reported that whilst most of the churchyard is in good order and well kept, there is one major area of concern. There is a large portion of stone retaining wall, adjacent to Rectory Court, that is missing, part fallen down and part in a state of disrepair. The Parish Councillors and Richard Green agreed that this needs attention and an initial estimate is that repairs could be in the order of £10,000, especially if rebuilt in Northamptonshire stone to make it in keeping with the rest of the churchyard.

In terms of the letter relating to the transfer, the PCC had rated the overall condition of the churchyard as 'Good'. When looking at the wording associated with the ratings, the Parish Council believed that this is incorrect and should be rated as 'Poor'; the Parish Council's current annual precept for 2019/20 is £9,500 and therefore, the sum of £10,000 would require capital investment for the repairs. Further, it was noted that no further information was attached to the Notice to support the rating of 'Good', despite the Notice advising of such (item B3). The Parish Clerk wrote to the PCC, advising accordingly, and asked if the PCC could confirm what action it intends to take to address this issue. The Clerk received a response from the PCC dated 5 July 2019, which advised that:

- No question has ever been raised about the effectiveness or suitability of this section of the boundary;
- Every 5 years, a full survey of the church and churchyard is undertaken by a qualified surveyor. The boundary has been maintained, is well delineated and the surveyors are satisfied with its present condition;
- The Ecclesiastical Insurance Company also carried out a detailed inspection and a risk assessment and no mention has been made regarding this area;
- According to the guidance notes from the MoJ, concerns about the condition of the churchyard, or financial implications of any transfer of maintenance are not usually issues relevant to an application for closure; and
- Therefore, in the opinion of the PCC, there is no problem with the churchyard boundary which requires financial output.

The Clerk noted that the PCC did not include copies of the said reports. The Parish Council discussed this and did not agree with the PCC. The Parish Council believes that the wall

requires attention and therefore, whilst they did not object to the application for closure of the churchyard, they did not agree with the condition of it being rated as 'Good'. Given that the burden of 'making good' the boundary wall would fall to Parishioners via an increase in the precept reflected in a Council Tax increase, the Parish Council felt it was obliged to ensure that all possible steps had been taken to minimise the size of the potential liability taken on when/if the churchyard maintenance is transferred. It was agreed that in the first instance, advice would be sought and copies of the reports would be requested.

ACTION: Clerk to advise PCC that advice is being sought, and to request copies of the survey and insurance inspection reports.

ACTION: Councillor Curtis to seek advice from NCALC and DDC on the closure of the churchyard.

- **Blocked Drains**

The Clerk wrote to Ian Smith, the Maintenance Manager from the Daventry Area at Northamptonshire Highways on 29th May 2019, regarding the blocked drains and gullies. She has chased for a response on 14th June, 28th June and 8th July. Mr Smith today confirmed:

- He spoke to the gentleman at 7, Harborough Road last week and his issue is more with a missing kerb causing water to run off the road and down the footway. which Mr Smith has asked his warden to look at;
- He has walked the Main Street in the village today and noted several gullies (8) that are full. All of the gullies in the village were last cleansed in April 2018, with some of those outside the 30mph signs toward Harborough being cleansed in December 2018. Currently, NCC have asked Highways to reprogramme their gully emptying programme to reflect some proposed cost savings. Gullies within villages would normally have been cleansed on an annual basis; however, given the silt levels within the network, it is felt that this period can be extended with no real detriment to the service.
- He has asked for East Farndon to be accelerated up the list which should be published imminently. If this fails, he will get his warden to raise a reactive order for a special visit.
- He has received some photographs/video from a resident of water running down the edges of the roads. He will endeavour to get the systems working to their full capacity. However, given the geography of the village, he advises that he will probably never be able to stop this occurring during heavy storms, and leaf litter/detritus tend to "matt" over the lids quite quickly in these conditions. Road sweeping is a District Council function and beyond his control.

- **Lubenham Road HGV Signage**

The Clerk wrote to Ian Boyes, Assistant Community Liaison Officer (Daventry & Kettering Area) at Northamptonshire Highways, regarding what action the Parish Council could take to change the HGV signage from advisory to compulsory on Lubenham Road. Mr Boyes advised:

- A mandatory weight limit will only be considered where there is strong evidence that a significant number of lorries are "rat running" on a daily basis and that the introduction of a restriction would result in a minimum reduction of 30 HGV movements per day, representing at least 50% of the total lorry movements in a day.
- Other considerations have to be taken into account to ensure that a limit will not transfer

the problem to other communities and to ensure that there is a more suitable alternative route that would not lead to a major increase in distance for lorry operators as, if the alternative route is too long, this leads to disrespect of the limit. Even if all these requirements can be met then a lengthy legal process, involving consultations, has to be undertaken that may result in objections. They currently have a back log of locations where they have requests for the introduction of limits but current funding constraints mean these cannot be progressed presently.

- It must be pointed out that it is far easier for a HGV driver to stay on a main road route rather than divert off through small rural roads and especially through villages where the tortuous nature of the roads, junctions and parked vehicles will result in far more gear changes and delays than maintaining their route on the main road. In most instances rural routes will only be used by drivers of larger vehicles if they have legitimate business to make deliveries in the immediate area.

- Rural Weight Limits are generally introduced as "zones" between two major routes as introducing a restriction on a single road will just displace traffic onto neighbouring roads pushing the problem elsewhere. The current arrangements share any HGV movements between various roads in the area. Introducing a restriction on Lubenham Road would simply displace HGV traffic onto Marston Lane or, if that was also included in the restriction, through Marston Trussell, Clipston and Sibbertoft.

- To introduce a zone, this would have to encompass all the villages between the A5199, the A508 and the A4304 so it would be a very large zone that would need a significant signing, not only at the start of each entry into the restriction but also on the approaches to each junction as HGV drivers would need forewarning that they cannot turn at the next junction. Signing alone for such a restriction could easily cost in excess of £50,000 to implement.

- **Website Regulations**

The Clerk report that under The Public Sector Bodies (Websites And Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018, the Parish Council needs to ensure its website complies with the regulations by 23rd September 2020. The Government Digital Service (GDS) has produced a detailed guide to making the website accessible and publishing an accessibility statement. The Clerk reported she has reviewed the guidance and in the first instance, the Parish Council should identify if anyone has the technical skills to do a detailed check to see if the content and functionality is WCAG 2.1 AA compliant. If not, we can pay for a third-party to undertake the work, which the GDS advises will cost around £1,300 a day, and a small website with static pages might take 1 to 3 days to audit. However, GDS state that if you cannot reasonably afford to pay an external supplier to do a detailed WCAG 2.1 evaluation, you can judge that it would be a 'disproportionate burden'.

In this case, a basic check for accessibility without any technical knowledge can be done, and GDS will be publishing guidance soon to help with this basic check; GDS also advise that if your organisation is very small, it may want to find a volunteer with a basic knowledge of websites to help.

Given the financial resources of the Parish Council, it was agreed that it would be a disproportionate burden to do a detailed WCAG 2.1 evaluation, and the Parish Council will seek a volunteer to do a basic check, when the GDS guidance is issued.

Further, as the website is hosted by BT Community Web Kit, the Clerk intends to raise a query with BT as regards its accessibility standard.

Additionally, the Clerk noted that the Parish Council will need to publish an accessibility statement, to confirm:

- Whether the website is ‘fully’, ‘partially’ or ‘not’ compliant with accessibility standards;
- If it is not fully compliant, which parts of the website are not currently meeting accessibility standards and why (for example, because they are exempt or it would be a disproportionate burden to fix things);
- How people can get alternatives to content that is not accessible to them; and
- How to contact the Parish Council to report accessibility problems - and a link to the government website that they can use if they are not happy with your response.

ACTION: Clerk to raise query with BT regarding website accessibility standard.

- **Information Commissioner’s Office Registration**

The Information Commissioner’s Office (ICO) is responsible for the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). As a town, parish or community council, the law says if you are processing personal data you must pay a data protection fee to the ICO, unless you are exempt. Failure to pay the fee could result in a fine of up to £4,000. The Clerk confirmed that she had worked through their online self-assessment tool to establish whether the Parish Council needed to pay, and it was marginal. Taking a prudent approach, the Parish Council has registered, and the Clerk has set up a direct debit so that the fee is £35, rather than £40.

- **One-Off Event Grant**

The Clerk reported that East Farndon Amenities Trust had applied for the grant for the Village fete (held on 22nd June 2019), and the application had been supported by the Parish Council (agreement having been obtained by email from the Councillors). The application was successful and a £230 grant was awarded.

- **War Memorial Upkeep**

Councillor Burton raised the issue of the ongoing maintenance of the War Memorial. It was agreed that in the first instance, Councillor West would deal with the weeds on the steps/walls, and a request for a volunteer to maintain the War Memorial would be sought.

ACTION: Councillor West to weed War Memorial steps/walls.

ACTION: Councillor Burton to ask for a volunteer to maintain the War Memorial in the newsletter and on Facebook.

- **NCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan**

The Clerk reported that NCC is consulting on its Rights of Way Improvement Plan, which is a document NCC is required to have by law, and sets out NCC’s priorities in dealing with rights of way (footways, bridleways and byways).

The draft plan and related material can be found at:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/northamptonshire-highways/rights-of-way/Pages/rights-of-way-improvement-plan-page.aspx>

Comments need to be received by 9th September 2019. Whilst the Parish Council can submit its own response, DDC has asked Parish Councils to make them aware of any issues they are concerned about, to help inform DDC’s own response.

The Clerk advised that the Footpath Warden had no comments to make. The Parish Council also had no comments to make.

45. Finance

Bank Reconciliation

<u>Balance as at 1 April 2019</u>		
Current account	£8,372.05	
Deposit account	£1,550.80	
		£9,922.85
<u>Income</u>		
Church contribution to mowing 2018/19	£506.00	
Precept	£4,750.00	
Interest	£0.19	
VAT refund 2018/19	£905.64	
		£6,161.83
<u>Expenses</u>		-£3,022.15
<u>Balance as at 8 July 2019</u>		
Current account	£11,511.54	
Deposit account	£1,550.99	
		£13,062.53

The bank reconciliation was checked and signed by Councillor Hodgetts .

Actual vs. Budgeted Spend To Date

	Precept Agreed	Expenditure to Date	Balance
Street lighting and maintenance	£1,500.00	£814.62	£685.38
Subscriptions - NCALC	£240.00	£237.10	£2.90
Insurance	£800.00	£683.08	£116.92
Donations	£100.00	£11.96	£88.04
Training	£200.00		£200.00
Mowing of Burial Ground/Hedges	£2,250.00		£2,250.00
Clerk Salary	£2,600.00	£845.60	£1,754.40
Parish Council/Clerk Expenses	£400.00	£167.36	£232.64
Miscellaneous Expenses	£200.00		£200.00
Graveyard Responsibility	£1,000.00		£1,000.00
DPO	£10.00	£10.00	£0.00
Defibrillator Expenses	£200.00	£126.00	£74.00
VAT on Purchases		£126.43	
TOTAL	£9,500.00	£3,022.15	£6,477.85

RESERVES			
Work on Lealands	£2,000.00		£2,000.00
Renovation of Village Spring	£500.00		£500.00

The Clerk raised the issue of the £2,000 reserve for 'Work on Lealands' that has been sitting in the books for a number of years but not utilised. It was agreed that this reserve should be reviewed at the September meeting, following a site visit by Councillors West and Burton.

ACTION: Clerk to add review of 'Work on Lealands' reserve to agenda for September meeting.

ACTION: Councillors West and Burton to carry out a site inspection of The Lealand.

The following payments were agreed by all Councillors

Payee	Reason	Amount £	Chq no.
EON	Replacement of Church Cottage lantern	336.00	online
ICO	Data Protection Fee	35.00	online
EON	Lighting Maintenance	64.69	online
EON	Electricity	230.14	online
Caroline Burton	Clerk salary and expenses for June/July 2019	456.79	online

46. 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.

47. Any Other Business

- East Farndon WI – Councillor Cooper had suggested to the Clerk that East Farndon WI may benefit from a donation from the Parish Council. The Parish Council agreed that if the WI make an approach with reasons, it will consider any request.
- NCC have advised that all customers should use Street Doctor to report highway defects, which can be found here:

<https://www3.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/northamptonshire-highways/roads-and-streets/Pages/report-highway-problem.aspx>

By using the Street Doctor site, any report will be logged appropriately, go to the right team and customers will, if requested, receive updates of what NCC are going to do and why. FixMyStreet should not be used, as reports will not get to NCC; NCC do not currently link to FixMyStreet directly, although they are looking to implement this in the future. Further, NCC do not use any of their social media sites for public defect and issue reporting but they do want to communicate using these channels. Twitter @nnhighways informs people of roadworks and transport and highway services but the purpose of the feed is not for reporting defects in need of attention.

48. Date of the next meeting – 10th September 2019 at 7.45pm
Provisional meeting date – 13th August 2019 at 7.45pm

49. Closure

The meeting closed at 9.05p.m.

Signed that the Minutes are a true and accurate record

Chairman _____ **Dated** _____

22/19