

FECKENHAM PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on Thursday 15 May 2014 at 7:45pm

05/14/01 **The Council elected Cllr R Williams Chairman.** Due to his absence, Cllr Hawker chaired the meeting.

05/14/02 **Apologies:** Chair Williams & Cllr Dormer

05/14/03 **The Council elected Cllr Hawker as Vice Chairman.**

05/14/04 Present Councillors: K White
E Atkins
F Hawker
P Eaton
S Arthur

In Attendance: Ten parishioners, WCC Cllr Gretton, RBC Cllrs Chalk & Clayton

05/14/05 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- a) Register of Interests: Councillors are reminded of the need to update their register of interests.
- b) To declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
- c) To declare any Other Disclosable Interests in items on the agenda and their nature.
- d) Written requests for the council to grant a dispensation (S33 of the Localism Act 2011) are to be with the clerk at least four clear days prior to a meeting.

Councillors who have declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, or an Other Disclosable Interest which falls within the terms of paragraph 12(4) (b) of the code of conduct, must leave the room for the relevant items. Failure to register or declare a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest may result in the commission of a criminal offence.

05/14/06 **Financial Regulations** adopted by the Council on 16 April 2009 were noted.

05/14/07 **Standing Orders** adopted by the Council at the January 2008 Meeting were noted.

05/14/08 The **Code of Conduct** adopted by the Council at the June 2012 Meeting was noted.

05/14/09 The **Complaint's Procedure** adopted at the 19 November 2009 Meeting was noted.

05/14/10 The **Clerk's Delegation Scheme For Planning** adopted by the Council at the September 2007 Meeting was noted. **Chair Williams, Cllrs Eaton & Atkins** appointed members of the delegation scheme.

05/14/11 The November 2013 **Risk Assessment and Internal Audit Test** were noted.

05/14/12 The **Clerk's Finance Support Group** adopted at the May 2008 Meeting was noted. **Chair Williams & Cllr Eaton** appointed members of this group.

05/14/13 The **Emergency Decision Making Scheme** adopted at the September 2007 Meeting and amended at 18 February 2010 Meeting was noted. The Clerk is permitted urgent expenditure up to £400 including VAT per month to be made without a formal decision to do so in a Council Meeting. Two cllrs are required signatories and all spending must be reported at the next meeting of the Council.

- 05/14/14 The **Chairman's Allowance** of £100 per annum adopted by the Council at the September 2007 Meeting was noted. The allowance can be spent by the Chair with prior approval of the Council and is reimbursable upon presentation of a receipt/invoice.
- 05/14/15 **Councillor's Expenses** adopted at the December 2007 Meeting were noted. At the December 2007 Meeting the Council adopted the recommendations of the District Independent Remuneration Panel whereby Councillors can claim expenses whilst on Council business.
 Travel allowance of £0.40 per mile
 £10 maximum allowance for lunch
 £15 maximum allowance for dinner
 All other expenses as per invoice
 All expenses must be agreed to in advance by the Council
- 05/14/16 **Mr & Mrs White** appointed the post of **Parish Footpath Warden(s)**.
- 05/14/17 The Council appointed **Cllrs White & Hawker** as **CALC Area Representatives**.
- 05/14/18 The Council appointed **Cllrs Arthur & Dormer** to the **Square Management Comm.**
- 05/14/19 The Council appointed **Cllr Hawker** as the representative on the **RBC Standards Committee**.
- 05/14/20 **Cllrs Eaton & Dormer** appointed **FIG Liaison Officers**.
- 05/14/21 The Council appointed **Cllr Atkins** as **Parish Lengthsman Liaison**.
- 05/14/23 The Council appointed **Cllr Hawker** as **Rep for Village Hall Comm.**
- 05/14/23 **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
 The Council resolved to approve the Minutes for the meeting held 17 April 2014.
- 05/14/24 **County Councillor Report:** Report given during Annual Parish Meeting.
- 05/14/25 **Borough Councillor Report:** Report given during Annual Parish Meeting.

The meeting was suspended for Open Forum – see notes at end of Minutes

PROGRESS REPORTS

- 05/14/26 **FIG: ACTION: Chair Williams to draft Mill Lane donation thank you letters.** No update.
 Lupin seeds planted. Cheque to be signed during meeting. Grass to be cut after bloom ends. Matter resolved.
- 05/14/27 **Lengthsman:** The Clerk reported the following on 6-2-14: Reference #6019878
HIGH STREET
1. Drain opposite #17 needs to be cleared, car parked 6027235
 2. Drain at junction with Turton Gardens (opp Valentine Cottages) needs to be cleared – too dangerous in middle of road 6027257
 3. Drain opposite #43 needs to be cleared, car parked
 4. Drain opposite #57 needs to be jetted, cannot clean below pipe, water too deep
 5. Drain opposite #64 needs to be cleared, car parked
 6. Drain opposite Old Needle Mill needs to be pipe jetted, water too deep to reach
- ASTWOOD LANE**
7. Drain opposite Willowdene needs to be cleared; can't open
 8. Drain opposite #9 needs to be cleared; can't open

9. Drain opposite Winfields Store needs to be cleared; can't open

HAM GREEN LANE

10. Drain opposite Elcocks Brook Pub going toward Brookhouse Lane needs to be pipe jetted; can't open

11. Ditches need to be cleaned

Council enquired if the new Highways reporting site could be used to generate information about the likely timescale for these works to be done. It would be helpful if the report in future agenda/minutes could indicate when the matter was reported and the likely date for completion of works. The new tool may provide this information. The Clerk responded that the report dates are listed. Clerk to await launch of new system.

05/14/28

Flooding: No update.

05/14/29

Estate Gates: Cllr Gretton reported area is too narrow to post "Feckenham" signs on estate gates. **ACTION: Cllr Gretton Investigating an alternative.** No update.

05/14/30

Footpath Warden: No update.

05/14/31

Pool Barn Wall: No update.

05/14/32

Bench on Cruise Hill Lane: Council investigating if bench be turned around to take advantage of the great view.

05/14/33

Walking Map Brochure: Chair Williams reports the cost is £200-250 for 1000 copies. **ACTION: Chair to discuss design with the Whites.** No update.

05/14/34

Annual Return/Internal Audit: R Fletcher completed the audit; no issues raised.

05/14/35

Feckenham Manor Community Archaeology Project: 29-4-14 letter received; may meet in July. One idea to explore is raising the profile of the project at the Feckenham Wake.

05/14/36

ICO: Fee paid; FPC now registered. Matter resolved.

05/14/37

WCC/Lengthsman Contracts: WCC contract forwarded; matter resolved. Lengthsman contract not yet signed.

05/14/38

Superfast Broadband: **ACTION: Co Cllr Gretton to investigate.**

05/14/39

Correction Letter: Letter emailed 26-4-14. Letter will be printed by way of statement of explanation, not as a correction. The Redditch Standard insists the site in question is within Feckenham because the Planning Authority stated as much. Matter resolved.

NEW AGENDA ITEMS

05/13/40

TO CONSIDER ORGANIZING A WORKING PARTY WITH THE AIM OF RESURFACING MOORS LANE

Chair Williams applied for a Spirit of the Community Award to be applied toward the repair of Moors Lane. See 7-4-14 email.

The Council resolved to form a Working Party consisting of Chair Williams and Cllr Arthur. Terms of reference not set.

05/14/41

TO CONSIDER REVIVING NDP STEERING GROUP

Place on July agenda. **ACTION: Cllr Hawker to contact previous members of the group to gauge interest.**

05/14/42

TO CONSIDER THE INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT AND COMPLETE THE 2013/14 YEAR END ACCOUNTS

After some debate as to how to proceed, Cllr Hawker read the questions from Section 2 of the Annual Return. There were no issues with completing Section 2.

Cllr Hawker noted the Internal Auditor's comments concerning the justification of reserves. The Clerk stated the reserves were justified in ring fenced reserves outlined in the budget. **ACTION: Clerk to obtain clarification from the Internal Auditor.**
ACTION: Clerk to complete the Return and forward to External Auditor.

CLERK'S UPDATE

05/14/43 CALC Training and Networking Dates
Meetings, Management and Money Thursday 15th May
Accounts and Finance Thursday 19th June
Effective Meetings and Chairmanship Wednesday 2nd July
Insurance and Risk Tuesday 15th July

The Council resolved to pay for Cllrs Hawker, Eaton & Atkins to attend the training session on 19 June; cost is £75 per person. **ACTION: Clerk to book three places with WCALC.**

05/14/44 **Schedule of Correspondence Not Yet Responded To**
RBC: Licensing Act 2003 Review – The Council declined to comment

05/14/45 **Schedule of Correspondence Received** (not otherwise noted)
S Shaw: Support proposal to pay percentage of business rates direct to parish and town councils – the Council declined to support this initiative
M Selves: Speed cameras in Astwood Bank – Chair Williams responded that FPC has no jurisdiction in the matter and has passed no resolutions.

05/14/46 **Schedule of Correspondence Sent** (not otherwise noted)

PLANNING MATTERS

For Parish Council Consideration

05/14/47 **RBC Approvals**
2013/189/FUL: Restoration and extensions of Mutton Hall Farm house and conversion of brick barn to a single dwelling FPC supports the application

RBC Refusals

RBC Pending

FINANCIAL MATTERS

05/14/48 **Schedule of Invoices**

A Farnsworth April Lengthsman	£198.00	PHA '36 s259/600
S Arble April stipend & expenses	£289.39	LGA'72 101,11,12
HMRC Clerk tax	£14.40	LGA'72 101,11,12
Where Next lupins seeds	£93.60	HA 1980 s96
WCALC Membership Dues	£358.78	LGA '72 s143

Schedule of Receipts

Interest April	£0.68
RBC 1 st Precept	£4150.00
HMRC VAT Return	£1840.42

COUNCILLOR REPORTS & Future Agenda Items

Highways reports to WCC

They have a new reporting system going live next Tuesday 6 May (for potholes, street lights etc) which should be a huge improvement on what has gone before. It certainly looked slick in the demonstration and an improvement on the old system. We are asked to try it out and feed back to them. It will be publicised/launched in June. They think it will particularly benefit Parish Clerks who may have more than one report at a time to submit.

Broadband roll-out

There was a presentation on this from Stephen Ashton, WCC's Broadband Project Manager, and a representative from BT. I spoke to them at some length after the meeting and gleaned the following:

There is a map available on the website <http://www.superfastworcestershireshire.com/home> showing which areas are included in phase 1. The Phase 1 roll-out is being done in the most cost and time efficient way, so moving across the county in a logical fashion. The most important factors influencing this are engineering issues. The availability of Airband services did not play a part in the choice of areas included in the current first phase of roll out in Worcestershire. He cited as evidence of this that some areas with Airband provision are covered by Phase 1.

The bulk of Feckenham Parish is not included in the areas to receive fibre in Phase 1. Following Phase 1 there will be further phases. We are unlikely to get fibre broadband in these phases of work, which are due to be completed by 2016. After that, he was unable to say. The factors influencing inclusion in the current roll-out are the level of interest in the community (we would score highly here as we showed an early interest), the speeds available already (so with Airband we have good speeds already), and technical issues.

As to technical issues, the BT man explained to me that the further you are from a cabinet or exchange - if more than 3 kilometers - the lower the speed will be for the consumer. He looked at the map and suggested they might be able to provide 8 Mb/s to Feckenham with their current roll-out of equipment. (By way of comparison I currently get between 17 and 20 Mb/s from Airband). So some areas will be left out because it is technically not possible with current systems to provide superfast. He did say there is new technology becoming available soon that would be able to do better.

On the plus side, there are, apparently, some premises on the eastern edge of Feckenham that will be getting fibre. It is possible to look on the website <http://www.superfastworcestershireshire.com/home> to work out if you are attached to one of the cabinets or exchanges that will be in the first phase. Secondly, it is apparently technically possible for Airband to supply 50Mb/s though there would be a cost to that for consumers. Neither of them was able to help me as to how we would go about getting Airband to provide this.

They told me that the amount of money available for the roll-out is uncertain, because depending on the success of the project some part of the profits should become available to carry out further works. Or in other words it is not certain when the money will run out. So there is the possibility of some areas quite low on the list of priorities to be provided with fibre later on in the process.

Given that the enthusiasm of a community to be included is influential (because they want people to sign up to use and thus to pay for the service, so demonstrating a demand is a plus) it may be that making a big fuss eg a petition/campaign is worthwhile. I cannot say they sounded optimistic though.

Plans for increased role for Parish Councils.

WCC Chief Executive Trish Haines is leaving and being replaced by Clare Marchant. Both spoke. Both dealt with the further savings needed over and above those already made by the CC, in order to break even. The CC themselves will provide only those services that cannot be commissioned externally. They wish to consider the possibility of local communities (largely PCs) taking over the provision of services either where the CC cannot afford to provide a service any more, or where the local community would like to provide a service themselves. There was discussion about whether there would be any money for this. Clearly not if the service is one the CC cannot afford. In other circumstances they may be prepared to provide some money or support, at least to get a project off the ground. Mention was made of imminent changes in connection with the precept.

They want to strengthen the role of the Parish Clerk.

They also raised the issue of communications between WCC and the Parishes. They appeared to concentrate on dissemination of information rather than two-way communications with Parishes and much was said about the difficulty of getting a response from Officers. Nonetheless we can follow them on Twitter, look at their website, and as I mentioned in my previous note there is the new highways reporting system.

Parish Spotlight

The Parish Spotlight session was about the purchase and running of a village shop and pub in Bishampton by the PC. Interesting but I do not think relevant to us at present.

Date and Venue of Next Meeting

05/14/51 Parish Council Meeting 7:30 on 17 July 2014 at the Feckenham Village Hall

The Meeting closed at 9:00pm

Signed
Chairman

Date

OPEN FORUM NOTES

05/14/52 Q Carey: Superfast Broadband is a government funded project of which Feckenham is not included. Currently distributing petition to include Feckenham in the current rollout. While Airband is a good temporary solution, it is not a viable long term solution because the services available are limited.

Cllr Gretton stated Superfast Broadband is intended for 90% of the county and specifically for areas which are not financially viable for an upgrade. There will be 8 phases, phase 2 currently in progress.

Cllr Chalk: Feckenham was not included in the current rollout because it didn't express sufficient interest 18-24 months ago.

ACTION: Consideration for FPC approval of petition to be included on July agenda.

05/14/53 Cllr Atkins thanked A Pulsford for her part in the lupin planting.