

Minutes of a meeting of Chelsham and Farleigh Parish Council held on 6th February 2023 in Farleigh Hall, Farleigh Court Road at 7.00pm

Present: Cllr Jan Moore (in the Chair)

Cllr Lesley Brown Cllr Neil Chambers Cllr Peter Cairns Cllr Jeremy Pursehouse
Cllr Barbara Lincoln

In attendance: Samantha Head (Clerk)

And 12 parishioners (all left at 7.41pm)

The meeting commenced at 7.02pm

1. Apologies for absence

None

2. Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interest by Councillors of personal pecuniary interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interests, and whether the member regards the interest to be prejudicial under the terms of the new Code of Conduct. Anyone with prejudicial interest must, unless an exemption applies, or a dispensation has been issues, withdraw from the meeting.

None

3. Public participation

- A parishioner requested that the PC, the District Council and the County Council take a stronger interest in Biggin Hill Airport (BHA) and its impact on the parish. He gave an informal report on the Bromley Council Scrutiny Committee meeting regarding Biggin Hill Airport, held the week before.

The Scrutiny Committee of Bromley Council discussed their recommendation made to their Executive Committee to decide on their review of the Noise Action Plan (NAP) that was supposedly implemented 6 years ago when the airport's operating hours were extended. The NAP had been due to be reviewed after 5 years. This review was overdue.

The general view appeared to be that BHA had reneged on their side of the bargain and several (if not all) of their undertakings in the NAP have not been delivered.

There is a strong body of local opinion that BHA should be held to account.

A number of London Borough of Bromley (LBB) councillors spoke in favour of strong action to get BHA to deliver on their undertakings on noise abatement and in the interim to withdraw the extension of operating hours and revert to the situation that prevailed before the extension was granted in 2015.

A number of LBB councillors did not speak at all and there was no vote on the subject - this was due to a Draft Response review by the council's legal department. The final decision rests with the Executive Committee on Wednesday. Oddities included: the lease not containing any breach penalties and no effective independent monitoring of the flight path.

The Scrutiny Committee held the clear view that the views of residents living under the flight paths must be taken into account before final decisions were made.

One question arose: did 'residents' mean all residents or just residents of Bromley?

The Chairman thanked the parishioner for his report and asked him to act as an informal liaison for the PC on the BHA issue, to which he agreed.

- The majority of parishioners present had come due to the disturbing news they had heard regarding Tandridge District Council's (TDC) decision not to renew the head lease on Farleigh Common. The parishioners wanted to know firstly if this was true and secondly if the PC had a plan on how to deal with this.

The Chairman informed the meeting that it this was true and asked Cllr Pursehouse to give his District Councillor report (item 6b on the agenda) as it was likely this would address everyone's concerns.

Cllr Pursehouse gave the following report:

- TDC made a decision to withdraw from its long-term lease with Merton College. Cllr Pursehouse has discussed this matter with both the TDC CEO, who was astounded by this decision, and also with the leader of the council. The decision has been taken as a delegated item - 'ongoing land management'. Cllr Pursehouse indicated that he would be raising this at the forthcoming full council meeting - Standing Order 30 question: 'I was extremely distraught to hear, during a phone call with a TDC officer, that TDC has already given notice to Merton College, that the council will be withdrawing from its decades old lease on Farleigh Common. Considering Merton College's reputation as an absentee landlord, this will be of great concern to everyone in Chelsham & Farleigh and Warlingham. I can understand TDC's desire to not spend scarce money on land it does not own, but Farleigh Common is a large, ancient and environmentally important site, with much rare flora. Notice to end the lease has been given without any idea of how this environmentally important area will be looked after in the future.

I was told by a previous officer that this was under consideration, but that notice would not have to be given until March. Consequently, I was in discussion with officers on ways of achieving that.

The decision to withdraw from the lease was taken under officer delegated power and has not been the subject of meaningful consultation with the district members or the parish council.

Would the Leader of the Council agree with me that, while officers may officially have delegated powers, some issues are so sensitive that they should be brought to committee anyway? Would she also agree that decisions should be discussed with the relevant parish council, especially in a climate where we are asking PCs to step up and take on more responsibility across the board? Further would she also agree that the decision to end the lease should be rescinded until a proper conversation over the future of Farleigh Common can be had by the District, the two parish councils most closely involved and local district members? Finally, would she agree that the final decision on this should be made by a TDC committee and Full Council?'

The following questions were then asked by parishioners:

- What are the annual maintenance costs for the common?
- Can Chelsham and Farleigh Parish Council take on the lease?
- What about tree maintenance?
- What is the grass cutting schedule? Can it go back to how it used to be done?
- How much is the peppercorn rent?
- Who provides the PLI?
- How does the conservation aspect affect the maintenance of the common?
- When should the common be cut?

- Have people got used to seeing the common strimmed?
- Why should the people of Chelsham and Farleigh pick up the costs for the common when so many from outside the parish use it?

An offer was made for a local resident to cut the grass but only as it was done previously - not as per the current schedule.

Costs for having the common cut and baled are around £3.5k to £4k (annually). Tree maintenance costs are not clear but likely to be in the region of sound £6k over the next 2-3 years. The peppercorn rent is £5 p.a. The PLI is currently provided by TDC. The cut and clearing of grass done in order to maintain a proper ecological environment. The common is resisted as a common so has to stay as is. The PC is not set up to manage the head lease. Chelsham and Farleigh PC had offered £2k a year for 5 years towards the maintenance costs. Warlingham PC had been asked for its support.

The Chairman thanked residents for attending the meeting and said that the PC would continue to work on a resolution and would keep everyone updated as to the progress.

4. To approve and sign the minutes of the previous council meeting held on 16th January 2023

0014/0223 Members approved the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2023. They were duly signed by the Chair.

5. Matters arising (for information only)

None

6. Reports:

a) County Councillor

No report

b) District Councillor

Cllr Pursehouse gave his report during item 3 - public participation.

c) Warlingham Library

Cllr Lincoln gave the following report:

There was a Library Committee meeting on 23rd January. There had been a party to celebrate 10 years of the Library's volunteers who had been presented with a certificate. There are around 40 volunteers.

The operating licence had still not been renewed as Surrey County Council was considering perhaps turning this licence into a lease. However, SCC leases the building from TDC's Housing department.

The library has been promised £6k to spend on books and will be able to choose their own selection as opposed to receiving books from a centralised service.

The redecoration is ongoing and the library is looking for a space to store the books. All Saints Church has offered to look after the paintings.

Visitor numbers are improving and good numbers were reported especially for children's loans.

The Warm Hub is not well used.

7. Farleigh Common

- **signage** - Cllr Rush would be contacted for an update.
- **permission for access to common for car show on 9th or 16th July** - The Bull public house has asked if could use the common again, as last year, for a car meet. Members discussed whether the event was successful last year and whether there were any complaints of damage or litter. None had been reported. Members suggested a fee for the use of the common was charged.

0015/0223 Members agreed permission for The Bull to host the event. A fee of £50 would be charged. The organisers must provide evidence of PLI in advance of the meet which must be properly marshalled and all rubbish must be cleared after the event.

8. Approval of draft letter to The Bull

The sign installed by Star Pubs, partially on PC owned land, was still in situ. A letter had been drafted and circulated to all councillors prior to the meeting requesting Star Pubs remove the sign or request permission to relocate it to a position which is less obtrusive than the current one.

0016/0223 Members approved the letter and requested the Clerk send it to Star Pubs.

9. Trees at Cherry Tree Cottage

Cllrs Pursehouse, Chambers and Brown all visited Cherry Tree Cottage to view the trees. They reported that there was one small tree near the entrance, which was in contact with BT lines. It was not a big tree and would therefore likely not to cost too much to fell.

It was further noted that there was a small clump of trees covered in ivy whose branches overhang Chelsham Road and look like they could be a hazard to the highway. It was also suggested that it may be prudent to cut the ivy at ground level to allow the trees to grow more healthily.

It was suggested that costings for the above should be obtained and checked with SCC regarding the work near the Highway.

10. Local Government Boundary Commission for England - TDC Electoral Review

Cllr Chambers had prepared a report for the council. In his report, he outlined the reason for the review by the Boundary Commission (BC). Tandridge is currently divided into 20 wards served by 42 councillors. The BC has indicated that it is minded to retain the same number of councillors. The district has voted to have elections in thirds and so some in the district council expect that this will require the number of councillors in each ward to be three. The implication is that the number of wards could be reduced to 14. The BC has, however, indicated that this has not yet been decided and it cannot be until responses from the public have been received and analysed.

Chelsham and Farleigh is currently part of a 3-member ward as it is linked with Warlingham East.

The BC states that boundary changes should produce better and more balanced representation across the area, and bring together locations of similar character and concerns.

Members discussed the merits and pitfalls of continuing the link with Warlingham East or of seeking to be linked with other neighbouring parishes e.g., Woldingham, Oxted North and Tandridge or Tatsfield and Titsey.

0017/0223 Members voted 4 to 1 in favour of maintaining the current link with Warlingham East. A comment to support this would be drafted ahead of the March meeting for approval.

11. Parish Council Vacancy

Following the resignation of Cllr Marsh, there was now a casual vacancy. Due to the upcoming election in May, the PC was not obliged to fill this vacancy but could do so if it wished by co-opting a new councillor. The Clerk would post the notice of vacancy on the PC website.

11. Natural England - soil sample request

Natural England had written to the PC to request permission to take some soil samples from Broad Green.

0018/0223 Members approved this request and further suggested other tracts of PC land from which soil samples could be taken. The Clerk was requested to complete the form received from Natural England and make the further suggestions.

12. Planning - to determine the Parish Council's position on Appendix A

TA/2022/1601 5 Henley Wood, Chelsham Common, Chelsham, Warlingham CR6 9PB

Erection of single storey side / rear extension, first floor side extension and front and rear dormer windows in association with conversion of loft to habitable accommodation.

0019/0223 Comment: The Parish Council does not object to this proposal but draws the officer's attention to the overall increases in volume to this property over time as a possible consideration.

TA/2022/1117 Chelsham Place Farm, Limpsfield Road, Warlingham CR6 9DZ

Remove flat roof rear extension and replace with a 10 metre deep, gable ended timber framed extension that reflects existing. The rear door with dormer roof to be removed and replaced with new rear door and adjacent roof lights. The front porch to be replaced with new timber frame with pitch roof over.

This proposal is to make a number of internal and external alterations, the most conspicuous of which would be a single-storey rear extension to the south east side of the building representing a proportionally large addition to the existing footprint with 12 velux windows (others proposed elsewhere).

0020/0223 Comment: Chelsham Place Farm is a Grade II listed 1294828 (SHER: DSE4019) property and the Parish Council therefore draws the attention of the officer to this fact in relation to the overall scale and effect of the proposed alterations inside and out.

TA/2022/1536 Chelsham Place Farm, Limpsfield Road, Warlingham CR6 9DZ

Remove flat roof rear extension and replace with a 10 metre deep, gable ended timber framed extension that reflects existing. The rear door with dormer roof to be removed and replaced with new rear door and adjacent roof lights. The front porch to be replaced with new timber frame with pitch roof over. (Listed Building Consent)

The same application as TA/2022/1117.

0021/0223 Comment: Chelsham Place Farm is a Grade II listed 1294828 (SHER: DSE4019) property and the Parish Council therefore draws the attention of the officer to this fact in relation to the overall scale and effect of the proposed alterations inside and out.

TA/2022/1434 The Old Laundry, Ledgers Road, Chelsham, Warlingham CR6 9QA

Erection of single-storey rear extension which will extend 3500mm from the rear facade of the existing building and will be 7270mm wide.

This property has a considerable history of planning applications. The current application is for an extension to the rear of the existing dwelling, which is a relatively new building. The extension projects 3.5m from the rear, but is described as in keeping with the existing design.

0022/0223 Comment: The council does not object to this and leaves the decision to the officer concerned.

13. Finance**Payment of invoices:**

Samantha Head	Salary	£ 285.60
Samantha Head	Expenses	£ 10.50
HMRC	PAYE / NI	£ 71.40
Viking	Printer ink and paper	£ 117.35

0023/0223 Members approved the payment. The invoices were checked and initialled by Cllr Moore.

14. Matters for reporting or inclusion in a Future Agenda:

- Farleigh Common Head Lease
- Biggin Hill Airport
- Highview, Beech Farm
- Tree on Limpsfield Road
- Riding on Farleigh Common

The meeting closed at 9.09pm