

FARLOW PARISH COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

Annual Parish Meeting

The Annual Parish Meeting is to be held on Friday 6 May 2016 commencing at 8.00pm in Farlow and Oretton Village Hall. This meeting will be combined with the Village Hall Annual General Meeting.

The meeting will be addressed by Gwilym Butler, Shropshire County Cabinet Member, to discuss the County's financial problems and the ways in which Parish Councils can help.

Proceeding to the other formal business of the evening we will invite a variety of speakers to address the audience on a wide range of issues/topics affecting life in this Parish. An opportunity to voice your opinions, raise concerns, make suggestions. **Use it.**

Councillors and Officer

Zella Bache resigned from the Council in June 2015 and we thank her for her services to the Parish. The Election Officer ruled that, after due process, the position could be filled as a Casual Vacancy. At the July Parish Council Meeting Geoff Wadsworth was unanimously voted to fill the vacancy and we welcome him to the Council. The other Councillors and Clerk served throughout the year. Ann Broomhall and John Derricutt were unanimously elected Chair and Vice-Chairman respectively by their fellow Councillors at the May 2015 Annual General Meeting.

The names, addresses and telephone numbers of the present Councillors and other relevant parties are given on the last page of this report.

Shropshire Council

At a meeting, in March 2016, at Shirehall between representatives from Parish Councils across Shropshire County, Leader Malcolm Pate spelled out in great detail the future financial problems looming from 2017/18 onwards. Central Government proposed cost savings, the unfair way resources are allocated to rural authorities, phasing out of business rate support grants by 2020, will have a drastic effect on the ability of County to fund some services. This can only be further exacerbated by the small business rate proposals recently announced in the Budget 2016.

County Councils cannot increase Council Tax by more than 3.99% without triggering a referendum to approve any such rise. A referendum would cost Shropshire County circa £0.5m with no guarantee of the outcome. Turkeys do not tend to vote for Christmas. He earmarked some £4.2m of services, leisure, libraries and environmental which could be Precepted by Parish Councils (not subject to the Referendum Rules). These include services provided by market towns such as Cleobury Mortimer but which surrounding Parishes enjoy and could contribute towards the cost. Every £1,000 Precepted by Farlow Parish Council would cost each band D household c£5.60 per annum (11p per week). This proposal will be discussed at the Annual Parish Meeting to gauge your views.

Shropshire Council (continued)

Shropshire Council is proposing joining the West Midlands Combined Authority as a non-constituent member. The price for such Membership, from 1 June 2016, will be £25,000 per annum. We consider our interests would be best served with collaborating with like Counties such as Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Lengthsman's Scheme/Highways

We have been invited to continue the Lengthsman scheme for a further year (2016/17). However, County has warned all spending is under review (see Shropshire Unitary Councillors section above) so there is no cast iron guarantee this scheme will extend beyond that year. To continue this system we may have to Precept in the future.

This scheme has been a great success for both Parish and County and very cost effective.

Housing in Parish

The SAMDev policy has now been signed off and adopted by County. It will have little effect on us and County are not bound by the number of houses we proposed in our submission!

It is worth reminding you of our housing policy as set in our SAMDev submission. Our policy is to allow a very limited amount of single plot private housing with the emphasis on smaller properties within the defined clusters. Larger multi-unit developments are not acceptable. Such developments attract Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from the developer. From the introduction on 1 January 2012 up to 31 March 2015 some £2.4m CIL money has been collected across the County. The latest figures for Farlow Parish Council Local Fund are not available at the time of going to print (£8,484 December 2014)

In addition we will support Self Build Exception site developments subject to applicants satisfying all the guidelines including the local connection rule.

Parish Plan

In 2010 the first Parish Plan was published and distributed to all Parishioners. It was the aim to review the plan every 5 years and produce a new plan for the following 5 years.

In 2015 a review of the first Parish Plan was carried out and a questionnaire distributed to gauge its success and to determine new objectives and actions for the next version.

Whilst the return rate of the questionnaire was poor, enough information was gathered to enable the next Parish Plan to be published and distributed in the summer of this year.

Planning

Legislation has been introduced to assist farmers by granting an alternative use for genuinely redundant farm buildings. However the rules are quite strict. They have to be part of an established farming business and apply to buildings in sole agricultural use on 20 March 2013. There are also limits on the size of a development, number of dwellings (maximum of 3) and the amount of rebuilding work permitted.

Farlow School

The school continues to perform well thanks to the very hard work of the Head teacher and staff. Councillor Steve Andrewes is a Governor and Chairs the Standards and Curriculum sub Committee. There are currently 48 children on the register.

Health

The future of an A&E facility in Shropshire has still not yet been resolved. Adult Social Care demands a large, statutory, slice of the County's budget.

Farlow Church

Revd Mark Daborn is now in post as priest-in-charge of the Stottesdon group of parishes and can be contacted at the Rectory in Stottesdon (718127). Links between Farlow School and the Church continue to be strong and positive as are those with the Methodist community - look out for a joint service in the summer. Parish services of Holy Communion are on the first Sunday of the month starting at 9 am, with a friendly and warm welcome offered to all. A confirmation service for the churches in the group is being planned for the autumn.

EU Referendum.

As you are no doubt aware the referendum vote takes place on 23 June 2016 and your polling station is Farlow and Oreton Village Hall. Whatever your views, leave or remain, it is important everyone casts their vote. The decision will affect our lives for generations.

Finance

External audits are being phased out and your Parish Council is in the process of implementing The Smaller Authorities Transparency Code. Smaller authorities will be required to publish prescribed financial/governance information via a web site (currently being commissioned) with free access to all parishioners. The prescribed information includes items of expenditure above £100, year-end accounts, annual governance statement, internal audit report, list of Councillors, details of assets and minutes and agendas of formal meetings. Grants are available to cover the cost of resources necessary to implement the new Code.

Finance (continued)

Our Precept 2016/17 is £2,900 (2015/16 £3,500). During the year a grant of £600 was made to the Village Hall and donations of £199 were made to organisations offering benefits to this Parish. Our External Auditors are Mazars LLP, The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham DH1 5TS. We again extend our thanks to Charles Metcalfe, of Hillgate Corner, Silvington, for continuing to act as our Independent Internal Auditor.

Police/Emergency Services

Any incident or suspicious behaviour, however trivial it seems, should be reported to the Police on the **101** number and obviously 999 in a dire emergency. To help the speedy location of any incident quoting your **six digit OS grid reference** when summoning help from the Fire Service, Police or Ambulance is most helpful.

Local Joint Councils (LJC)

The LJC's still meet, though financial grants are no longer available, and it is a useful forum to meet with and discuss with neighbouring Parish Councils issues which affect all of us.

Village Hall

Their AGM is being held in conjunction with the Annual Parish Meeting. This is an ideal opportunity for Parishioners to see how they can become involved.

Bridleways

The Clee View Bridleways group is a small charity formed by local horse riders in 2010. Their aim is to keep local bridleways accessible and also to try and open up new routes.

2015 proved to be another successful year despite a reduction in funding from Shropshire County Council. There were many productive meetings, work parties, a fund raising equine table top sale and the groups AGM held in June.

Work parties were carried out on many of the routes which included overgrown vegetation clearance, gate adjustments and general repairs.

The Detton to Prescott bridleway had a large amount of mud and debris, caused by storm damage, removed from it and stone provided by the council re-laid over the damaged areas.

Another major project was the route from Titford bridge to Keepers Cottage where again storm damage had washed away large amounts of top soil to expose a tangle of tree routes that made the route impassable by horses and even difficult on foot. Sixteen tonnes of stone provided by the council was used to repair this route plus many hours of work from the group's volunteers.

If anybody is interested in keeping safe access to your local bridleways contact details can be found on the group's website, Cleeviewbridleways.co.uk. There is also a Facebook page.

Help with work parties, fund raising and donations are always welcome.

Footpath Group

A Footpath Group has been set up Chaired by Zella Bache. There is a close liaison with Helen Beresford from County. We have just received a grant of £100 towards the costs of running the group.

Fly Tipping

There was an extreme case of fly-tipping by the Village Hall in the summer. If perpetrators can be traced prosecutions will be considered.

Broadband

Recently fibre optic cable was laid underground between The Crossroads and The Methodist Chapel. The quality of the workmanship, the disruption of the existing drainage facilities and the subsequent backfilling left much to be desired.

Several telegraph poles were erected, at the same time, in Lanes End as part of the new scheme to improve broadband in rural areas.

Parish Meeting Report - May 2015

Dr. Mark Baldwin gave an excellent talk entitled "The Battle of the Atlantic-the U Boat Threat" and the role played by the codebreakers at Bletchley Park. It was well received by the audience.

Ann Broomhall, Chair of Farlow Parish Council spoke about the issues confronting the Parish Council during the past year and thanked everyone for their contribution.

Others who addressed the gathering and reported on their sphere of influence, were Stephen Andrewes (Farlow School Governor), Unitary Councillor Madge Shingleton, Marian Wootton (Women's Institute), Steve Tolley (Lengthsman) and James Shier, Chairman of the Village Hall Committee.

Farlow Parish Charities

This is a registered charity, which was set up many years ago, when a property was sold for the benefit of Farlow and Oretton residents in need. Only the interest and not the capital can be spent. The Trustees meet three times a year (September, February and May) and will consider each application on its merits.

Applications must be in writing addressed to a Trustee or to the Secretary.

The Trustees are:

Terry Price (Chairman), Glebe Farm Farlow DY14 0RG, John Derricutt, Neil Sutton (addresses shown on page 6) and Christine Link, The Gobbetts, Farlow DY14 8TD.

Secretary:

Sylvia Jackson 4 Withies Bank Oretton DY14 0TB.

Members of Farlow Parish Council and other relevant names, addresses and telephone numbers (all 01746 dialling code unless stated) are as follows

Chair

Ann Broomhall
Moors Farm
Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 8RH
718643

Vice Chairman

John Derricutt
Middlehouse Farm
Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 8RS
718678

Parish Councillor

Stephen Jones
Well Farm
Farlow
Kidderminster
DY14 0RG
718650

Parish Councillor

Neil Sutton
Little Stocking
Oreton Road, Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 0TJ
718026

Parish Councillor

Geoff Wadsworth
Stone Haven
Moors Lane, Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 8RH
718551

Parish Councillor

Stephen Andrewes
1, Corner Cottages
Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 0TL
718557

Parish Councillor

Peter Brown
4, Summerfield
Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 0TS
718134

Unitary Councillor

Madge Shineton
2, Ralph Jones Terrace
Cleobury Mortimer
Kidderminster
DY14 8DB
(01299) 271186

Unitary Councillor

Gwilym Butler
Littlebeck House
Lion Lane
Cleobury Mortimer
DY14 8BT
(01299) 270108

Parish Clerk

Derick Bromley
2, Lane's End Cottages
Farlow
Kidderminster
DY14 0RH
718062

Secretary Farlow Charities

Sylvia Jackson
4, Withies Bank
Oreton
Kidderminster
DY14 0TB
718291

Lengthsman

Stephen Tolley
Beulah Cottage
Withies Bank
Oreton, Kidderminster
DY14 0TB
718447

Parish Watch Contacts

Stephen Tolley (**718447**)
John Derricutt (**718678**)
Stephen Jones (**718650**)
Peter Harman, Endfield, Nr Crossroads
Farlow DY14 0LL (**718293**)

First Point of Call

For all services from missed bins to
difficulties with care packages
08456789044

SEE YOU ALL ON FRIDAY 6 MAY 2016

