



Fordham Parish Council Meeting

M I N U T E S

Meeting held 23rd May 2023 at 6.45pm
in Fordham Village Hall

Those present

Councillors: G Branagh (Chairman), C Alexander, H Branagh, D Chapman, M Hamilton-Macy and L Pfander

Also In Attendance: K Cameron (Clerk)

There was 3 members of the public present

23-24/1 Election of Chairman

It was proposed and agreed unanimously that Cllr George Branagh be appointed as Chairman for Fordham Parish Council. Councillors expressed their thanks on behalf of the Council to Cllr G Branagh for leading the Council and continuing to be Chairman for another year. Councillors wished the Chairman well for the year ahead.

Resolved. that Cllr George Branagh be appointed Chairman for Fordham Parish Council.

23-24/2 To receive Chairman's Declaration of Acceptance of Office

Resolved. that the Declaration of acceptance of office was signed by Cllr G Branagh and the Parish Clerk.

23-24/3 Appointment of Vice Chairman

It was proposed and agreed unanimously that Cllr D Chapman be appointed as Deputy Chairman for Fordham Parish Council

The Chairman thanked Cllr N Durlacher for his Deputy Chairmanship over several years and his support throughout. The Chairman thanked and welcomed Cllr D Chapman to the role and looks forward to working together in the forthcoming year.

Resolved. that Cllr D Chapman be appointed Deputy Chairman for Fordham Parish Council.

23-24/4 Those present and apologies for absence

The Chairman welcomed members of the Council and public to the meeting and apologies were received from Cllr N Durlacher

Resolved. that apologies for absence were accepted

23-24/5 To receive any declarations of interests from Councillors

Resolved. that there are no declarations of interest recorded by Councillors

23-24/6 Minutes of the Parish Council meeting Tuesday 25th April 2023

Resolved. that the minutes of the Parish Council meeting Tuesday 25th April 2023 be accepted as a true record and the Chairman signed.

23-24/7 Public question time

The meeting may be temporarily suspended for up to fifteen minutes if members of the public wish to comment on agenda items or items of interest or concern to the Parish

A member of the public raised two items not on the agenda asking who will be the representative for the business community liaison group and requested that the group continue to hold regular meetings with Fairfield's farm and Colchester Skip hire. He also requested that a farming schedule is obtained from Fairfield's farm so residents can be advised when there will be disruptions within the village. *The Chairman advised that quarterly meetings are still in place and the Parish Clerk will seek a schedule and communicate to the residents.*

The Chairman thanked residents for raising their concerns.

23-24/8 Receive report from County and City Councillors if in attendance

There were no County or City Council Councillors in attendance at the meeting

23-24/9 Planning

9.1 To discuss any planning applications received between up to 23rd May 2023

Resolved. that no applications were received up to 23rd May 2023

9.2 To note planning decisions received

Members noted the planning decision received before 23rd May 2023

Application No	Address	Description	Decision
230748	44 Church Road, Fordham Essex CO6 3NE	Two Storey Side Extension, Single Storey Rear Extension and Replacement Porch	Approve Conditional 22.05.23
ESS/30/22/COL	Fairfield's Farm, Fordham Road, Wormingford, Essex, CO6 3AQ	Retrospective planning permission for a composting facility to process 25,000 tpa of green waste to include the provision of weighbridge, 0.4ha of hardstanding for windrows and associated landscaping	Refuse 05.05.23

23-24/10 Parish Council Policy Documents

Resolved. To review and agree to adopt the following policies

10.1 Financial Regulations

Resolved. that members reviewed the Financial Regulations that were agreed in May 2022, minute reference 22-23/11.1, approved and adopted for 2023-24.

10.2 Standing Orders

Resolved. that members reviewed the Standing Orders that were agreed in January 2023, minute reference 22-23/125, approved and adopted for 2023-24.

Resolved. that members received and approved the Risk Assessment for 2023-24 noting any actions will be completed by the Parish Clerk.

23-24/12 Annual Return for year ending 2022-23

12.1 Internal audit report 2022-23

The Chairman advised that a meeting was held on 2nd May with the internal auditor who noted that there are no recommendations and that the AGAR is ready for submission to the External Auditor. The Internal Audit report was received and approved by the Council.

Resolved. that the Internal audit report for 2022-23 be received and approved.

12.2 Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement for the year ending 31st March 2023

The Chairman asked members to review and approve the following declarations:

1 We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

The accounts are prepared by the RFO on an income and expenditure basis in accordance with the Account and Audit Regulations and guidance in Governance and Accountability for Local Councils, A Practitioner's Guide. This has been scrutinised through the internal audit process.

2 We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

The Council has ensured proper arrangements are in place and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.

3 We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or manage its finances.

The Council continued to operate within a robust set of governance arrangements, resulting from the controls identified in the Risk Assessment which is reviewed annually. Measures also included regular reviews of Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, and training for councillors and staff.

4 We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

The Council published the audit notices and supporting papers for the Accounts 2022-23 and has agreed to provide an inspection period commencing on 14th June to 14th July 2023 inclusive for the exercise of electors' rights this year. This entitles any person interested to inspect and make copies of the Annual Return, books, invoices, receipts etc at the Village Hall (by appointment only) during this period. Notices to this effect will be displayed on the Council's noticeboards and on the Council's website where the Statement of Accounts and accompanying documentation will also be available to view.

5 We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

At its meeting on 10th May 2022 the Council carried out the annual review of the Risk Review (minute no 22-23/12) which included details of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

6 We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

The Council are presented with a Bank Reconciliation and all income and expenditure for each calendar month. The accounts are agreed by full Council at each meeting and signed by the Chairman.

7 We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.

There were no matters raised in the reports which were noted at the Parish Council meeting on 27th September 2022 minute no: 2022-23/78.2 and no further action was required.

8 We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority, and where appropriate have included them in the accounting statements. The RFO has considered these matters to ensure all items relating to the Council's business activity have been disclosed.

9 (For Local Councils only) Trust Funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we have discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.

This is not applicable for Fordham Parish Council

Resolved. That members approved and agreed for the Chairman to sign Section 1, the Annual Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31st March 2023.

12.3 Section 2 – Accounting Statement for the year ending 31st March 2023

The Chairman asked members to review and approve the Accounting Statement for the year ending 31st March 2023 and to agree for the Chairman to sign Section 2.

Resolved. that members approved and agreed for the Chairman to sign Section 2, the Annual Accounting Statements for the Year Ended 31st March 2023.

12.4 Approval of the Annual Accounts & Supporting Statement

The Chairman asked members to review and approve the Annual Accounts and Supporting Statement for the Annual Governance review.

Resolved. that the Annual Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2023 be approved.

23-24/13 Compliance and GDPR

Resolved. that members of the Council and the Clerk agreed to comply to the GDPR Security Compliance Checklist and signed.

23-24/14 Appointment of RFO (Responsible Finance Officer)

Resolved. That the Clerk be appointed RFO.

23-24/15 Appointment of officers for roles and responsibilities within the Parish Council

Resolved. That members be appointed to roles within the Parish Council (see below).

23-24/16 Appointment of officers for representation with village organisations

Resolved. That members be appointed to represent the PC with village organisations (see below).

Councillor	Committee	Parish Council Role	Representation for Village organisation
George Branagh CHAIRMAN	Planning Committee	Health and Safety (Deputy) Police Liaison Emergency Planning Traffic Calming	Speedwatch
Dave Chapman DEPUTY CHAIRMAN	Personnel Committee	Website Village Magazine	

		Events	
Christine Alexander	Planning Committee Personnel Committee	Footpaths Welcome Booklet	Local History Society Allotments Association
Helen Branagh	Personnel Committee	Litterpicks	
Nick Durlacher		Financial Officer Business Community Liaison	All Saints & Eight Ash Green Church
Mike Hamilton-Macy	Planning Committee	Environment Heritage Archaeology War Memorial	Local History Society
Lou Pfander	Planning Committee	Health & Safety Officer Village Maintenance	Village Hall Fordham Motor Show

23-24/17 Casual Vacancy

Members were advised that there are two vacancies on the Council following the election. It was agreed to advertise the vacancies and co-opt once new candidates are identified

Resolved. that the Council will advertise the vacancies and co-opt accordingly

Cllr C Alexander left the room at 19.11

23-24/18 Finance

18.1 Online Banking process

Resolved. that members received the online banking process and approved.

18.2 Confirmation of regular direct debits and payments for 2023-24

Members reviewed the list of regular direct debit payments and approved the list below:

Payee	Cost	Frequency	Description
H3G (Three)	£7.32	Monthly Direct Debit	Mobile phone
J&M Payroll	£1311.59	Monthly	Clerks Salary inc HMRC/NI
J&M Payroll	£30.00*	Monthly Standing Order	Payroll Fees
C Cousins	Up to £100.00	Monthly	Playground safety checks
		£20 per visit - up to 5 per month	<i>Until September 30th 2023</i>
JPB Landscapes	Up to £818.29*	Monthly invoice	Grasscutting
		Fees change dependant on no of cuts	
ARU Print	£40.50	Quarterly	Village Magazine

Resolved. that the list of regular direct debits and monthly payments noted above be approved

Cllr C Alexander returned to the room at 19.12pm

18.3 Banking Arrangements

Resolved. that Cllrs G Branagh, H Branagh, D Chapman N Durlacher and M Hamilton-Macy remain signatories for the Parish Council bank account.

18.4 Internal Auditor

Resolved. That ASAP Accounting be appointed as Internal Auditors for 2023-24.

18.5 Memberships

Members were asked to consider membership to associations for Councils and Clerks 2023-24. After lengthy discussion it was agreed that due to the increased costs for bin emptying and grass-cutting, the Council would need to reduce costs in other areas. It was decided that they will renew membership with SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) and RCCE (Rural Community Council of Essex) associations and the Clerk will write to EALC and CaLC to advise they will no longer subscribe to their memberships.

Resolved. that the Council will continue memberships with SLCC and RCCE only for 2023-24

23-24/19 Expenditure

19.1 Invoices for payment received between 29th March to 18th April 2023

Resolved. that members noted the increase of 0.32p to Three mobile invoice, and the amended invoice total of 25th April 2023 be **£1,534.91**.

19.2 Invoices for payment received between 26th April to 16th May 2023

Resolved. that the payments listed below were approved, total expenditure: **£2,695.46**.

Payable	Purpose	Amount (* VAT)
Three mobile	Mobile phone	£7.32
J&M Payroll	Fees (May)	£36.00*
J&M Payroll Services	May Payroll <i>Including HMRC/Ni/Pension</i>	£1,311.59
C Cousins	Playground checks (May)	£100.00
ASAP Accounting Services Ltd	Internal Audit	£252.00*
JPB Landscapes	Grasscutting	£504.95*
Post office	Letter to Barclays for SO	£2.60
SLCC	Clerks training day	£25.00
EALC	Playground training	£456.00*

19.3 Invoices for payment received between 17th to 23rd May 2023

Resolved. that the payments listed below (presented at the meeting) be approved, total expenditure **£911.25**

Payable	Purpose	Amount (* VAT)
George Branagh	Annual Parish Meeting	£56.55
MTM Plant & Sales Ltd	Coronation event	£150.00*
Apogee Property & Utility Consultants	VAS unit	£352.50*
Apogee Property & Utility Consultants	VAS unit	£352.50*

Resolved: That payments total **£3,607.01** be approved

23-24/20 Health & Safety and Village Maintenance

20.1 Weekly H&S checks for the Playground

w/c: 17th and 24th April 2023

w/c 1st May, 8th and 15th 2023

Resolved. that the reports were noted with no further actions required

20.2 Playground inspection

Members were advised that the Playground Inspection is due in June/July 2023 and agreed to appoint Wicksteed to perform the inspection at a cost of **£187 +VAT**, an increase of £27 from 2022. Cllr M Hamilton-Macy will attend the inspection.

Resolved. that the Clerk will instruct Wicksteed to perform the inspection.

20.3 Tree work on Village Green

Members received a quote for tree reduction works on the village green and approved at a cost of **£750 + VAT**

Resolved. that the Clerk will instruct the contractor to complete the tree works on the village green

23-24/21 To receive Councillors reports

Cllr L Pfander advised that she has received several complaints about the severe and dangerous potholes on Wormingford Road and asked if the Council has any influence for their repair. *The Chairman noted that they are on the schedule but a date is unknown.*

The Chairman thanked everyone who assisted with the organisation of the King's Coronation picnic and to those who helped on the day. A full debrief will be had at the June Parish Council meeting.

23-24/22 Items for next meeting

The next meeting will take place on 27th June 2023 at 7.30pm in the Village Hall

Resolved. that the following items will be placed on the agenda for future Parish Council meetings

- Coronation debrief (June)
- Co-option (when required)

There being no further business the meeting closed at 19.30