

MINUTES OF FALMER PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday September 26th 2023 7.30pm

PRESENT. Chair Melanie Cutress (MC) Annie Davies (AD) Andy Pearce (AP) Martin Gapper MG

APOLOGIES Helen Herbert and Eric Huxham

14 villagers attended.

MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING. Were signed as a true record of that meeting.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST. None

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR. To be addressed as the meeting progresses.

MATTERS ARISING:

1. Stadium Issues

- Europa match v Athens had seen a lot of pick-up cars parked in Falmer north causing chaos. MC would report to BHA. No stewards were visible at the end of the match. Derek Chapman offered to help and report it to BHA.
- Complaint from Pauline again about difficulties of exiting traffic at the farm shop. MC reminded everyone that only the police could direct traffic and that the traffic signals were altered to allow more cars to exit the village post-match.

2. Village Maintenance.

- Falmer pond. Summary of pond restoration plans were handed out. They had been provided by Nick Lane the BHCC ranger, who had held two information sessions by the pond August 11th and 14th for villagers and the public.
- David Harbottle's photographic record of the pond with initial photos of now was circulated.
- Marcus White, a consulting engineer, and hydrologist with specialism in restoring historic ponds had been appointed to draw up a plan of work needed to be done.
- potholes round the pond in need of repair.
- Extra grass on road verges by ESCC were continuing and the pond grass had been cut recently by BHCC.

PLANNING

- Bennetts field Student halls of residences for 555 bedrooms. Planning application LW/22/0175. APPEAL had been held in August and the decision would be end of October/ November.
- Polowood Shoot SDNP/22/05978/LDE application for a new Certificate of Lawful development resulted in the same outcome as the previous application and only 52 days of shoot was allowed. However, Mr Coomber was now applying for a new planning permission and so was being allowed to continue his business even though the 52 days had already been used up.
- Parish councillors had taken up Derek Chapmans offer to visit the shoot. Visited in August and concluded that it was a well-run business.
- One of the main problems for villagers remained the speed of traffic on Ridge Road. A lot of male drivers were causing concern by aggressive driving and not slowing down for children,

horses, dog walkers etc. MC explained that the road had been tested for speed and the average was 21mph. Amy Martin had had a very difficult encounter with two cars full of males who refused to reverse despite their proximity to a passing place. In the end Amy reversed feeling very intimidated.

- Jane Hill also commented on the volume of traffic going to the shoot and the problems of cars passing each other in difficult places.
- Jane commented on the loudness of the shoot. Her family can hear the noise when inside their home including their daughter who has a hearing impediment.
- Hannah Jewel from Caxton Court said that she could hear the shoot.
- Derek Chapman said he would help with Go Slow road signage on his road from Moon Corner to St Marys.
- Amy suggested more passing places would help from Moons corner.
- Derek suggested noise monitoring at the shoot . He is also expanding his vineyard which would increase traffic and he would be seeking planning permission for offices.
- Donna suggested that Gary Coomber should attend a parish council meeting for an open discussion with villagers. Martin Gapper said he had suggested this to Gary.
- Another serious issue which had already been reported to the police was the Dirt Motor Biking from Stanmer woods going round the back of the downs to Falmer at weekends. No number plates so can't be reported. Driving dangerously, and wrecking crops in fields. Police seem to have been unable to do anything about this. Sussex University is aware.
- Donna made the point that there were developments in the village which were creating problems for villagers like the Polowood shoot and the Tithe barn venue.
- 2 Swan Cottages SDNP/23/01743/HOUS. Change of use from a garage to an independently occupied dwelling. Falmer PC would object.

FINANCE

- The accounts were reviewed and accepted.
- No VAT refund yet.

ITEMS BROUGHT FORWARD.

- Boundary Festival at Stanmer Park. MC and MG had a meeting with contact Charlie Locke and Anna. They had stressed security patrols and noise monitoring and said there would be litter picks. There would not be stewarding to keep cars out. MC was concerned that Falmer North would be parked out with no room for returning residents to park.
- A letter had been circulated to every household from the organisers with details of times, what was happening and how to complain if there were issues.

Tithe Barn events venue.

- The nearest neighbours Mr and Mrs MacRae and Mr Huxham and Mrs Newman-Starley had requested that the PC seek a noise assessment for the tithe barn to check that noise levels were in keeping with planning permission. MC had made this request to SDNP planning officer Naomi Langford who had dealt with the original application for planning permission which had been granted in February 2022. Only one event to date had not created a noise problem for the nearest neighbours. MC had asked for all remaining 2023 events to be monitored and if the noise levels were accurate 85 decibels, then a lower level needed to be set plus sound proofing.
- To date the SDNP were not responding to this request which was very disappointing.

- So far Naomi Langford had asked in an e mail whether the noise issues had been reported to the owners. They had.
- Until noise checks were made there was nothing to suggest that planning conditions were not being met by Mrs and Mr Woolley. Mrs Woolley said all conditions were being adhered to.
- AH asked Mrs Woolley to remind all guests that there were neighbours and to be considerate and not to make a noise. This followed a nasty incident of shouting in the paddock. Mrs Woolley said they already did ask for consideration.
- There had also been an evening guest drop off by a coach and 2 double decker buses which returned to pick up between 11pm and midnight. This was contrary to planning conditions and Mrs Woolley apologised and said the coach company had let them down in providing small coaches which could have dropped off at the barn.
- Pauline asked about Sound proofing and barn door replacements to limit noise. Fran Woolley said they wanted to get it done but are held up by outstanding issues with SDNP who did not want to see the interior of the barn change
- Mrs MacRae had reported that she and her husband had tried to get a small mortgage to give them the funds to finish off the Old Granary conversion. This had been refused by some banks due to the proximity of a wedding venue. No details of which banks was available. This was very concerning. MC had also reported this to SDNP.

Next meeting November 28th