

MINUTES of the FARLAM PARISH COUNCIL ANNUAL PARISH MEETING held VIRTUALLY on WEDNESDAY 11th MAY 2022 at 7.15 p.m.

PRESENT

Councillors: C. Marsh (Vice-Chairman) (in the Chair), I. Ashton, A. Broomhead, J. Brown, S. Burd, S. Johnson and S. Lingard.

IN ATTENDANCE – Clerk to the Parish Council
County Councillor R. Dobson
City Councillor K. Meller

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on 4th May 2021 were submitted for approval.

RESOLVED to approve the minutes.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Councillor Marsh thanked Ray Hinton for his hard work as a councillor and Chairman, then read out the following Report on behalf of outgoing Chairman, Ray Hinton:-

The year has been a very interesting for Farlam Parish Council, having reached the lowest point in July when it became inquorate. Covid 19 having played its part. But the number of Councillors had been declining for years. Once the Council was inquorate it was put in the hands of the City Council to nominate a number of City Councillors, who with the remaining Parish Councillors would form a quorum to enable the Parish Council to have a meeting. The law says that this should be done as quickly as possible but they couldn't organise this until September. I don't think that this was done with the urgency the law implies.

However this delay was put to good use as I had about seven names of people who were willing to become Councillors and three who would join if we I was still short. Things got even better when Roger Dobson who was campaigning for the County Council Election took it on himself to letter drop households within the Parish asking for people to join the Parish Council. By the time we could have a meeting in September we had doubled the number of prospective Councillors.

The election process was peculiar and some good people were not elected but it did mean that the election was totally fair and unbiased.

Roger Dobson has been a great help to the Parish Council and I am very pleased to see that he has been elected to the new Cumberland Council and I am sure that he will continue to work with the Parish Council.

The rest of the year was reasonably uneventful.

A little history and some things that may be of help.

When I fell into the Chairs seat, it was out of necessity, not of any great desire and although I have been a Councillor for a number of years and although suspicious I was amazed that there wasn't any form of documentation handed from the outgoing Chair to the incoming Chair.

Fortunately I had been researching the Parish Council's past records and it was very illuminating. The starting point was the Parish Council's small office in the Lacy Thompson Memorial Hall, it contains old minute books and other papers, most of which were out of date so I removed them for Allison to dispose of them. The old parish minute books should have gone to the Archives in Carlisle to join the other parish documents. I looked through the minute books and was surprised to see that the same question was raised a number of times and then passed onto the City Council's Legal Department for an answer.

It seemed that everything relied on the memory of Councillors or the Clerk not on facts. Unfortunately the Councillors changed often as did the Clerk. Fortunately Allison has stabilised the position of Clerk and she will keep the council on the straight and narrow with all the legal stuff but she cannot be expected to know all the ins and out of the parish. The answers to most of the questions were in the office in the Hall or the documents deposited with Cartmell Shepherd. So I obtained the legal documents held by Cartmell Shepherd and made two copies of each and assembled them into two lever arch files, one each for the Chair and Clerk. Over the next few months I added any other information that I felt was useful as I came across it.

The file shows exactly the land the Council owns, leases and very importantly, the legal restrictions that have to be complied with, the length of any lease and termination date i.e. the Play area lease terminates in 2027 and there isn't the option to extend. I have mentioned this to the Land Agent for Greenside Estates, Christopher Gray at Edwin Thompson's. It needs to be pursued.

A recurring question was that of the relationship of the Parish Council with the Lacy Thompson Memorial Hall, this is documented in the Deed of Trust. The duties of a Custodial Trustee is also contained within the file. So I hope that whoever takes the position of Chair will familiarise themselves with the deeds and leases.

I'm sorry that I will not be at the meeting to hand this file over but I have given it to Allison along with the keys to the office, safe and front doors of the hall. Lea-Anne likes to be notified when you intend to go into the office, so that she knows who is in the hall.

The agenda's and minutes of meetings have to be legally displayed and the keys to the left hand side of the notice board on the front of the hall are also on the bunch with Allison. The HP laptop, Epson printer and the other items require to maintain the website have also been handed into Allison.

It is a legal requirement for the Parish Council to maintain a website and although I kept it up to the minimum, I do feel that to do the Parish justice it needs a councillor who can concentrate only on the site and perhaps link in the websites of other Parish organisations. There are enough Councillors now to share the load more evenly and I hope that you will all play your part.

If I may offer one piece of advice it is this, If you ask any question of the Principle Authority (the City Council at the moment, Cumberland Council next year) always check that they give a qualified answer.

The internet is a great help and the Government's web site has most laws that you will need and they are kept up to date.

Finally I would like to thank those that I have worked with over the years and all of you who sent me emails wishing me a happy retirement. I am and gone green. I've found my bus pass and I can walk to the bus stops for Carlisle or Newcastle, it's far more relaxing than driving a car and I don't miss it after sixty years.

RESOLVED to note the report.

PUBLIC DISCUSSION

None – no members of the public present and no matters raised.

CLOSE

Meeting closed at 7.18pm.