



FARNHAM PARISH MEETING · MINUTES

Wednesday 28 May 2025

Held at St Oswald's Church, Farnham — the Meeting was declared quorate.

Apologies. Received from Ian Thornton and Stacey Adams.

Declarations of interest. None.

Minutes of 12 November 2024. Unanimously approved as a true record.

Matters arising. The Chair reported that the insurance contract had been renewed for one year, the quote being within the 10% previously approved.

Treasurer's Report & Accounts

The Meeting followed the designated order of approval for governance and accounts matters.

1. Internal audit. Jonathan Wilkinson's internal audit report — no matters of concern — was accepted. *Proposed by Anne Wylie, seconded by Simon Theakston. Passed unanimously.*
2. Governance & internal controls. Key risks, systems and contract procedures unchanged from the previous year. Revised wording of contract procedures and the annual governance statement formally approved. *Proposed by Phil Roebuck, seconded by Richard Hall. Passed unanimously.*
3. Accounting Statements 2024 / 25. The Treasurer outlined the reasons for any changes from the previous year. *Proposed by Shirley Hooper, seconded by Anne Wylie. Passed unanimously.*
4. External audit exemption. Not required — both income and expenditure below £25,000. The Chairman was authorised to sign the exemption form. *Proposed by Sat Gidda, seconded by Simon Theakston. Passed unanimously.*

Election of Officers & Internal Auditor

John Hooper would retire as Chair on 30 June (moving house). Anne Wylie was willing to take on the role from 1 July for a maximum of two years; no further nominations received. *Proposed by Michael Taylor, seconded by Jonathan Wilkinson. Passed unanimously.*

Karen Robinson stepped down as website maintainer for work reasons; the role remained vacant. The Chair confirmed the village website domain would be retained until someone was appointed to review the need for, or future format of, the website.

Pamela Taylor continued as Treasurer and Secretary. *Proposed by Richard Hall and Sat Gidda. Passed unanimously.* Signatories agreed as John Hooper, Anne Wylie, Pamela Taylor and Phil Roebuck. *Proposed by Claire Hall, seconded by Simon Theakston. Passed unanimously.*

CHAIRMAN (FROM 1 JULY)

Anne Wylie

TREASURER & SECRETARY

Pamela Taylor

WATER, DRAINAGE & TRANSPORT

Phil Roebuck

PLANNING

Michael Taylor

ROAD SAFETY

Sam Green

SIGNATORIES

John Hooper · Anne Wylie · Pamela Taylor ·
Phil Roebuck

INTERNAL AUDITOR

Jonathan Wilkinson

WEBSITE MAINTENANCE

in abeyance

Remaining officer roles proposed by Claire Hall and seconded by Simon Theakston; all appointed unanimously.

Planning, Solar Farm & Battery Storage

Reported by Michael Taylor.

Village planning. Little to report; the declined planning application is still awaiting the appeal decision. The field for sale in the middle of the village has been offered with planning possibilities in the medium to long term.

Solar farm and battery storage projects. The main issues discussed were the proposed planning applications for two solar farms and two battery storage sites — intended to provide a total of 400 megawatts of electricity from 84 shipping containers of batteries. Richard Tallis and Steve McDonald from Scotton gave a presentation on the details and impact of these four potential projects.

They informed the Meeting that there is no direct connection between the ABEI proposal for battery storage and the proposed solar energy farm at Scotton. BESS installations are designed to stabilise the energy supply by storing power from the *grid* (not necessarily from green energy installations) at times when electricity is cheaper, and selling it back at periods of higher demand. Significantly, there was no mention of the solar energy farm proposal for Scotton in the information leaflet sent to the village by ABEI — though there may be confusion between the two projects by recipients of the leaflet. There appear to be no national guidelines or regulations governing the siting and operation of such installations.

Public safety concerns identified:

- Battery storage sites have had serious fires and even explosions in the US and elsewhere, involving evacuation over a 5-mile radius (though technical development is said to have reduced risks since).
- The proposed Lingerfield site is beside a road and very close to both a nursery and a school — a serious risk to children and traffic in the event of incident or leakage.
- The proposed Farnham Parish site (ABEI, under pre-planning application public consultation) is beside the sailing lakes and a nature reserve — similar risks to wildlife (particularly birds) and to members of the sailing club.
- The Farnham site is also at the end of a very narrow rural lane with poor access.

It was agreed that the Parish would raise objections to ABEI in the public consultation, with details put on the village email and WhatsApp groups so residents could make their own personal representations (not direct copies of the Meeting's objection) before the consultation deadline of 13 June. The main scope for objections, however, will be

later — when the planning application has been made and a public response can be made to the planning department of NYC.

Road Safety, Drainage & Public Transport

Nothing to report.

Defibrillator

Richard Hall made a detailed report on the process of deciding which type of defibrillator was needed for the telephone kiosk, how to acquire the box, and obtaining quotes for purchase, installation and future maintenance.

The Meeting authorised the Chair to sign the contract for acquisition of the kiosk and approved the purchase of a fully automatic defibrillator to be kept in an unlocked box.

Costs. £1,680 purchase, £295 installation, £80–£100 per year for batteries and parts.

Agreed: the Meeting would pay the costs initially and recover part from planned fundraising and private donations. A request for donations will go on the village email with bank account details. Claire Hall suggested the Church key holder be asked to check the phone box and defibrillator weekly.

Any Other Business

The new rector had started work. Six volunteers are helping with church matters in various roles; further offers of help would be appreciated.

Substantial tree maintenance had been carried out in the church graveyard by Bartletts at a cost of £1,056. After discussion the Meeting agreed to make a contribution of half this cost, subject to the Church Treasurer providing a copy of Bartletts' invoice. A request for personal contributions will also be passed on via village email.

