



Farthinghoe and Steane Parish Council

17/04/2025

Chairman's Report for the 2024/2025 Annual Parish Meeting

Another year has passed and although "Lock Down" has become a little used term nowadays we are still living in globally uncertain times.

Last year we were all praying for a political solution but alas it seems that Politicians were not listening.

I am talking globally but it is also time for local politicians to stand up to be counted and 2025 is a year when we can express our opinions and needs.

Don't miss your chance to vote.

This year has again been tinged with sadness in the Parish with the loss of Tony Deeley, Ruth Dashwood, Bryan Walker, Mick Jeffs, Geoff Hovland, Angela Redrup, John Stubbs, Michael Lunn, Mike Fortnum.

Tony, Ruth, Bryan, Mick, Geoff, Angela, John, Michael and Mike will all be greatly missed and their memories will always live on in our hearts. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families and friends to help them to cope with their sad losses.

On the bright side I had the chance this week to meet and interact with our new neighbour Florence, who was born in January. What a delight.

Continuing on with subjects mentioned in the 2024 report.

1 Farthinghoe and Steane Parish Council

Our thanks go out again to Dave Weston for his fine efforts as our Parish Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

We are truly lucky to have Dave helping us, his commitment to our Parish continues unabated.

However, there is a sad side, in November Dave will be retiring and he will be sorely missed.

I would like to express my personal appreciation to all of our Councillors for their efforts throughout the course of this year.

This year has seen the resignations of John Grant, after more than 16 years as a Councillor, and Wendy Hancock.

Wendy along with Sophie and James Harrison have taken responsibility for the development of the new Parish Council website and we hope that you like it. It is now up and running and can be found using

www.farthinghoeparishcouncil.gov.uk .The NEW email addresses for all Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk can also be found on the website.

2 Farthinghoe Bypass along with Mitigation Options

Our Bypass still remains a long-term option but will not be considered in any depth for at least 5 more years, unless there are fundamental changes in Central Government funding policies for roads, but we do know that current changes to Planning Policies could make our traffic situation considerable worse.

Keep your eyes open for substantial new Planning Applications for Housing and for Logistics Warehousing complexes.

We will do our best to keep you informed and our best means of contact will be the Farthinghoe Chronicle and the Parish Council Database (more about this later)

With the bypass on pause we will now concentrate our thoughts on Mitigation options.

Last year we had mentioned the apparent decline in interest in our traffic problems by our previous Member of Parliament and this has been exacerbated by the Farthinghoe Bypass not being included on the list of priorities which was passed to the new MP in July 2024.

We are not impressed as having one meeting with Sarah Bool MP in September 2024, where promises were made and virtually nothing has been heard since.

Not impressed is an understatement.

As mentioned, the Parish Council database is an important tool for keeping in touch and we thank everyone for attending the Kier/WNC Highways Exhibition at the Village Hall on 10March.

Your turnout proved that easy communication is so important and hopefully we were all able to make our points at the exhibition and that we were being listened to, which has not always been the case.

One thing became clear to me was that none of the visitors had a clue about the traffic queues turmoil we experienced during the numerous roadworks on the A422 with 2-way traffic lights in place.

Currently we have only 96 people registered on the email database but we need more, many more.

Please email Dave Weston on clerk@farthinghoeparishcouncil.gov.uk along with your name and street address and you will be included. Very straightforward.

Following the 10March meeting Nick Henstock, Assistant Director WNC Highways, has promised to take a detailed look at a revised Weight Limit scheme, inclusive in this scheme will be a 20mph limit (with the limit extended beyond the airfield road) along with Average Speed Cameras in place at the extremities of the speed limit.

No point in a limit if it is not enforced and a side benefit would be the disappearance of that ugly rusty monstrosity close to the allotments.

He has promised a written response in June and will come to the Parish Council meeting in July to discuss that response with Councillors. I would add that the Parish Council criticism of the 152 page bypass justification report has never been satisfactorily answered.

We were advised by WNC highways in 2023 that our streetlights do not meet the required standards for an MRN (Major Road Network) Highway.

This is double whammy because the carriageway doesn't either.

As Residents we did not ask for the road to be upgraded to an MRN and therefore do not feel it a Parish responsibility to upgrade the lights to that standard.

However, we have fielded numerous fears about the safety and security caused by the inadequacy of this lighting.

We have asked Cllr Larratt numerous times since November 2023 about this but with no answer-Is it a Dft or a WNC responsibility?

Finally, we recently learned from Stuart Timmiss via Cllr Herring that this will be addressed in June or July

Enough for now!!

3 Village Hall

The Solar Panels mentioned last year are now in place and the economics of this allow the hall to be kept at a more comfortable level for users—Good news indeed.

As I write this report the new storage container has quite literally landed off the end of a Hiab Crane and can be seen close to the hall.

4 Farthinghoe Primary School

There is a very large streamer currently attached to the very tidy new fencing. It states

“2024-2025 OUTSTANDING”

Need I say more

Thank you all.

5 Farthinghoe Chronicle

A big thank you, yet again, to Rosemary, Viv, Nick and to James for ensuring that our monthly Parish news and information is delivered come hell or high water.

And a big thank you to our new editor Lynne

6 Dashwood Play Park

I have nothing to add to John Grant's report

If we do not take care of the playpark we will lose it and losing it is also an expensive option and not just in money terms.

We need your help to identify the culprits, from outside the village, who misuse it ultimately at our expense

7 Copse Lodge Solar Farm

As we are now aware the final appeal to the Secretary of State by a Greatworth resident against the building of this Solar Farm was rejected.

How was she informed?

She saw large construction machines arriving to site well before she was officially informed.

How did we find out?

Cockley Road was overwhelmed with fleets of tippers and low loaders.

This, despite the fact that we had fought successfully for 3 years to ensure that Planning Conditions were in place to make Cockley Road a "No Go" area.

What are Planning Conditions worth?

WNC has a Planning Enforcement Team which at first seemed reluctant to enforce or maybe were unsure if they could legally enforce.

In any event it took them weeks to do what one phone call should have done within a day if receiving reports.

Still trying to grow back the hair I pulled out!!

However, many hours of searching uncovered a record of a throwaway aside made at a meeting 3 years ago about possibility of Community Funding to be administered by Parish Councils.

This fund for £60,000 has now been agreed with the Village Hall and the School having already benefited from an allocation.

The school really suffered from the noise and dangers of all those trucks and machinery but I hope that they will find the state of the art interactive Smart Boards to be helpful for the teachers and for the children's education.

My thanks to Sharon, Katie, Theresa and Maz for keeping me informed whilst we fought to stop those tippers

8 500 Bus Service

I know that we get the occasional hiccup but as a small village we are really very fortunate to have this service

9 Parish Council Database

PLEASE HELP US TO KEEP YOU INFORMED BY REGISTERING

Don't forget clerk@farthinghoeparishcouncil.gov.uk

HELP US TO HELP YOU

Yours Sincerely

Cllr Mick Morris

Chairman –Farthinghoe and Steane Parish Council

