

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday 17th November 2021

7.00pm Forton Parish Hall

PRESENT: Cllrs: E De Quincey (Chair), D Carver RFO, Cllrs: P Hammond, S Spencer, L Baynton.

Borough Cllr: M Smith, County Cllr M Winnington

Members of the public were also present.

C Little (Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence - Borough Cllr: P Farrington

Cllr S Tomkinson

2. Declaration of Councillors' Personal Interests - None

3. Minutes of Meeting 21st July 2021 – matters arising not on this agenda.

Cllr Carver advised that whilst he had now arranged for online banking the resolution to define how it should be operated had yet to be completed. He advised that this would be prepared ahead of the next meeting. Cllr Baynton advised that she had found someone to repair the parish noticeboards but it may be some time before it can actually be carried out. Cllr Carver asked for proposed costs to be made available so that we could ensure the parish council had available funds. Minutes agreed and signed.

4. Council Information in Private Email Accounts - Cllr De Quincey advised that the advice we had received from the Borough Council regarding official information in private email accounts had not been as conclusive as we had hoped, however; it established that there was no compulsion to secure corporate email accounts.

5. Councillor vacancy – Both members of the public in attendance were interested in the vacancy and Cllr Spencer advised that two other parishioners were potentially interested. Those present were asked to submit their details as further vacancies would be arising in item 11.

6. Financial report and authority for payments –

6.1 2021/2022 Quarter Three

The financial statement dated 05 November 2021 had been circulated. It balanced to the latest bank statements received: -

Current Account @ 05 November 2021	£110.00
Reserve Account @ 05 November 2021	£1,259.69
TOTAL	£1,369.69

6.2 Payments Approved

Precept Payments	Budget £ p	Agree to Pay
Clerk's Salary – 3rd quarter *(net)	110.54	88.54
PAYE		22.00
Clerk's Expenses – 3rd quarter	15.00	nil
DLC expense Web Domain renewal (+VAT)	23.98	28.78

*The gross salary is £110.54, PAYE as determined by the payroll service.

The council approved the above payments.

6.3 Budget 2022/2023

A draft budget for next year had been circulated. The RFO explained that there had been two minor changes since that draft; the biennial Web Domain payment had been made and this had included £4.80 VAT which had been inadvertently omitted from the previous budget and the Parish Hall Committee had indicated that there would be a £10.00 increase in the rent for the hall from 2022 and the rental period would, in future be for the calendar year. However it is also expected that there will be no charge made for the period April to December 2021 as an allowance for reduced use due to Covid. The budget, as amended requires a precept of

£1,050.93 (2 X £504.04 + Council Tax Support Grant expected to be £40.85).

Year	Annual Precept £ p
2021-2023	1,050.93
2021-2022	1,110.83
2020-2021	1,072.27
2019-2020	976.00
2018-2019	989.99

Salaries and Insurance had been increased in line with the Government's Consumer Prices Index (CPI – All items) which in October 2021 stood at +2.9%. The general contingency is preserved at 15% (£192.00) and the reserve at £300.00.

The revised budget was then unanimously approved by the council and the Chairman agreed to sign a copy.

Stafford Borough Council has not yet announced its concurrent grant but it is expected to remain the same as the previous several years, £270 (2 x £135).

The council authorised the RFO to ask SBC for the maximum concurrent grant.

ACTION: RFO

6.4 Concurrent Grants

The RFO reminded council that any Concurrent Grants must be made by 31 March 2022 or be forfeit back to Stafford Borough Council. The council agreed to encourage applications to be made so they may be considered at the meeting on to be held 09 March 2022.

7. Update on A519 safer road campaign – Councillors were made aware by members of the public, that three weeks before the fatal accident on 23rd October there had been another accident in which a car was written off in Shay Lane. Also, a lorry had ploughed into a tractor which in turn had flipped a road sign so that the

30mph now showed 60mph potentially leading drivers to believe they were entering a 60mph zone when it was actually a 30mph zone. They were also advised that there were no 30mph signs into Shay line, however it was established after the meeting that one was still in place.

Verge bollards had also apparently been flattened and as a result the edges of the road and residents property are no longer clearly defined.

A member of the parish, Rachel Udall, advised that she has been securing support from villagers to set up a community speed watch team using a speed gun provided by the police. Cllr Smith had highlighted the recent problems of excessive speed, accidents and signage to Diane Firkin of Staffordshire Highways but to date the 30/60mph sign had not been reversed and other missing signs had not been replaced. Cllr Winnington advised he would also raise the issue. He also advised that the County Council would eventually receive a report from the police following the recent fatal accident which may recommend safety improvements to the highway. Cllr Winnington said that he had met with Diane Firkin in Gnosall last week and driven down the A519. Dirty signs they had observed were due to be inspected within two weeks, he also observed overgrown hedges and obscured signage. He continued by saying that the Parish Council may need to chase landowners to trim back hedges if this work has not been completed in the next few weeks. The clerk committed to writing to any landowners if councillors could send contact details with photographic evidence if possible. A member of the public raised concerns over the narrowing of the A 519 footpath from Forton down to the Cricket Club. Cllr Spencer advised that he had personally previously trimmed these hedges but the banks were also disintegrating due to rabbit activity.

Cllr Winnington agreed to return with Diane Firkin to look at these additional items.

Cllr Smith suggested that the Parish Council write to the County Council requesting a 30 mile per hour limit on the A519 through Forton.

Cllr Hammond advised that he did not believe that the County Council would replace any missing verge bollards following his own attempt to get these replaced on the grass on the highway in front of the church.

Cllr Spencer asked if Cllr Winnington could arrange for the barriers left on the roadside following the recent highway repairs to be removed.

Cllr Carver said that he had looked at the cost of a speed awareness sign, but this was in the region of £3000 plus fitting. This would lead to a disproportionate charge on the rates of members of our community. A member of the public asked how long it would take to install signage if the money was made available. Cllr Winnington advised that approval would still be needed for the site of the signs.

8. Red Lion Sutton update – No update to report. The Parish is no longer involved in the process. Cllr Smith advised that planning permission for housing would be extremely difficult to secure in the open rural countryside as it is usually only permitted for farm workers houses.

9. Matters requiring attention in the Parish – Nothing to add.

10. Queen's Platinum Jubilee – Cllrs were asked to consider if the community should come together to create an event for the jubilee ahead of the next meeting.

11. Correspondence – The Chairman advised that he had sadly received the resignation of Councillor Tomkinson earlier in the week. He stated that Councillor Tomkinson had given many years of service to the parish and the community. Councillors gratefully acknowledged his significant contribution, and all agreed that his presence would be missed. Everyone wished him well for the future.

Councillor De Quincey then tendered his own resignation due to additional responsibilities on promotion at work. Due to the shortage of councillors he agreed to oversee the items currently outstanding.

The clerk agreed to notify the Borough Council so that the vacancies could be advertised on the website and notice boards.

Meeting closed 8:22pm

Date of next meeting 9th March 2022