

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting held Wednesday 5th May 2021

at 7:14 p.m. via Zoom

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

Borough Cllrs: P Farrington

C Little (Clerk).

1. Apologies for Absence

Cllr L Bayton and Cllr M Smith sent apologies which were accepted.

County Cllr Winnington did not attend the meeting.

2. Councillor Toon Resignation

Cllr Toon announced that he was sorry to be resigning from the parish council, due to personal reasons, after 26 years of service. During this time, he stated that had held the office of Chair and Vice Chair many times. He reflected on the planning issues and due diligence he had been involved in over the years and he said that he had prepared a large part of the statement included in the nomination for the ACV for the Red Lion Pub Sutton. The application which had been successful. The Chair thanked Cllr Toon for his significant contribution to the Parish and wished him well for the future, this was reiterated by his fellow councillors.

3. Declaration of Councillors' Personal Interests

None

4. Minutes Parish Council Meeting – 10 March 2021 – matters arising not on this Agenda

The minutes were amended by the deletion of “to be” from the title and agreed.

Cllr Tomkinson advised that following Cllr Winnington’s intervention the Council had attended the flooding and blocked gullies in Sutton which seemed successful to date.

5. Financial report and authority for payments

5.1 2020/2021 Year-End - 31 March

The council reviewed the financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2021. It balanced to the bank statements covering the year-end with a closing balance of £638.89. It is this statement provides the information for the annual return (AGAR), page 6.

The 2020/2021 Year End financial statement was accepted as a true record and would be signed by the chairman after the meeting.

5.2 2021/2022 Quarter One

The council reviewed the Quarter 1 financial statement dated 01 May 2021. It balanced to the latest bank statements received with a closing balance of £1230.30 the first tranche of £690.41, Precept, Council Tax Grant and Concurrent monies having been received from Stafford Borough Council on 12 April.

The 2021/2022 Quarter 1 financial statement was accepted as a true record and would be signed by the chairman after the meeting.

5.3 Insured Risks

The Council undertook its annual risk assessment and reviewed its insurance cover. Councillors were satisfied that the renewal insurance schedule received from Ecclesiastical Insurance met the risks the Council might face during the forthcoming year. (Insurance cover runs from 01 June to 31 May).

It was agreed that the cover provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance adequately covers all the risks councillors envisage the Council might face in the forthcoming year and that cover should be continued on the terms offered from 01 June 2021 to 31 May 2022 at the premium of £330.00 (budget £332.31).

5.4 Payments Approved

Precept Payments	£.p	Budget £.p	Agreed to Pay £.p
Clerk's Salary (gross) – 1st quarter	£110.54	110.54	88.54
Clerk's expenses	TBA	15.00	nil
SPCA subscription 2021/22 (already agreed & paid)	£98.00	98.69	98.00
Ecclesiastical Insurance premium 2020/21	£330.00	332.31	330.00
Parish Hall rent for 2020/21	125.00	125.88	TBA
PAYE	nil	nil	22.00

It was agreed the RFO could pay the parish hall rent once the invoice was received, provided it was close to budget.

5.5 Annual Audit 2020/2021

The RFO informed council that the audit papers (AGAR) needed to be submitted before 30th June this year. The necessary notices for the exercise of electors' right to inspect accounts and records will be posted with the period allowing examination from Monday 10th May 2021 to Monday 21st June 2021 (30 working days, having accounted for the 31st May Spring bank holiday).

The council therefore: -

5.5.1 Noted the receipt of the Internal Audit Report (Page 4 of the AGAR) already signed by the internal auditor.

5.5.2 Answered the Governance Questions Nos 1 – 8 in the affirmative (Page 5 of the AGAR). The Chairman & Clerk would each sign following the meeting.

5.5.3 Approved the Accounting Statements 2020/21 (Page 6 of the AGAR) which had already been signed by the RFO.

5.5.4 Approved the Certificate of Exemption (Page 3 of the AGAR). The RFO & Chairman would each sign following the meeting.

5.6 Vote of Thanks

The RFO proposed a vote of thanks to Robert Watson-Jones for having conducted the internal audit for no charge again this year. The council unanimously endorsed this and the clerk was asked to write a note of thanks.

ACTION: Clerk

6 Update on A519 Safer Road Campaign

The clerk confirmed that the next action in regard to this was to take action when the date of resurfacing is made known. This will then trigger a request for the clearance of roadside debris whilst traffic control is in place.

7 The Red Lion Inn, Sutton

The Minutes of the extraordinary meeting to discuss the Red Lion Inn, held on 21st April were amended by correcting the date and were then approved.

The Chair confirmed that the actions proposed at the last meeting had been taken. A dual application had been made by Dale Ingram on behalf of both the Parish Council and the Red Lion Action Group. All fees incurred had been prepaid by the action group ensuring that the parish council had no liability. He stated that if the decision to grant the Red Lion Asset of Community Value status is not over-turned then the planners would refuse planning and we would now just have to wait and see.

8 Matters requiring attention in the Parish - Spoil left by the dredging of Strine Brook alongside Meretown Lane update

Cllr Carver confirmed that he had liaised with Mick Bailey from Streetscene and the worst of the debris had been removed. The clerk mentioned that when displaying documents in the noticeboards in Sutton and Forton they were both in need of repair. Councillors agreed to try to find people in the community to support us with this. Cllr Farrington stated that he would check if the boards were still necessary now that the parish has its own website.

Action: Cllr Farrington

9 Volume of walkers through Forton

Cllr Hammond confirmed that he had noticed this during the first lockdown when Forton had experienced a significant and welcome increase in footfall of those walking to and from Newport. He raised concerns about the dangers to walkers in crossing the A41 and also that the path from the A41 to the River Bridge, was not

actually a proper footpath and consequently was not very safe. Whilst numbers of walkers have now reduced to some extent, pedestrians crossing the A41 safely was still a cause for concern. The clerk advised that this matter had been raised before when overgrowth was obstructing the view, and with the road being on the county/parish border it had been very difficult to get anyone to accept responsibility though the bushes were cut back eventually. Councillors discussed this at length, and it was agreed that contacting Newport Town Council to secure some caution signage might yield more speedy success.

Action: Clerk

10 Councillor Vacancy

Councillors were asked to consider if they knew individuals in the parish who would be interested in serving on the parish council.

11 Correspondence

None

12 Dates of Next Meetings:

Wednesday 21st July 2021

Wednesday 17th November 2021

Wednesday 9th March 2022

Wednesday 11th May 2022 (and AGM)

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at **8:02p.m.**