

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday 20th May 2020 at 7:15 via Zoom

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

Borough Cllrs M Smith, P Farrington. County Cllr M Winnington

C Little (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence: D Toon (Vice Chair) attending funeral, L Bayton unable to access Zoom. Apologies accepted.

2. Declaration of Councillor's Personal Interests:

None.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 11th March 2020 and matters arising not on this Agenda: Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman. The clerk advised that she had made contact with Helen Fisher who has confirmed she is looking into the long term plan to establish what works have been proposed for A519.

Cllr Winnington confirmed that the overgrown path between Forton and Sutton had been cleared. He also observed that as there were more walkers at present due to COVID-19 it would help keep the overgrowth at bay.

4. Financial Report and Authority for Payments

4.1. 2019/2020 Year-End

The financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2020 was presented. It balanced to the bank statements covering the year-end with a closing balance of £558.42. This statement provides the information for the annual return, page 6 which is discussed at paragraph 4.5.3 below. The Council accepted the 2019/2020 Year End financial statement as a true record and the chairman agreed to sign a copy.

4.2 2020/2021 Quarter One

The Quarter 1 financial statement dated 01 May 2020 was presented. It balanced to the latest bank statements received with a closing balance of £1131.61, the first tranche of £671.13, Precept, Council Tax Grant and Concurrent monies having been received from Stafford Borough Council on 06 April. The Council accepted the Quarter 1 financial statement as a true record and the chairman agreed to sign a copy.

4.3 Insured Risks

The Council undertook its annual risk assessment in conjunction with reviewing its insurance cover for the forthcoming year. Councillors were satisfied that the renewal quotation meets the risks the Council might face during the forthcoming year. (Insurance cover runs from 01 June to 31 May). Last year the Council had agreed to a long-term agreement – 3 years with Ecclesiastical Insurance this year will continue that agreement. It was agreed that the cover provided by Ecclesiastical Insurance adequately covers all the risks councillors envisage the Council might face in the year to 31 May 2021 and the RFO was asked to arrange renewal on the terms offered for 01 June 2020 to 31 May 2021 at the premium of £330.00 (budget £334.95).

4.4 Payments Approved

Precept Payments	£ p	Agreed to Pay £.p
Clerk's Salary (gross) – 1st quarter	£109.77	87.97
PAYE	nil	21.80
Clerk's expenses	TBA	nil
SPCA subscription 2020/21 (agreed in March)	£98.00	98.00
Ecclesiastical Insurance premium 2020/21	£330.00	330.00
Parish Hall rent for 2020/21 (budget £126.88)	125.00	125.00

The RFO was asked to make each of the above payments.

Action RFO

4.5 Annual Audit 2019/2020

The annual return has to be submitted by 29 June this year. The necessary notices for the exercise of electors' right to inspect accounts and records have already been posted with the period allowing examination from Thursday 04 June 2020 to Wednesday 15 July 2020.

- 4.5.1** The Council noted the receipt of the clean Internal Audit Report (Page 4 of the AGAR).

- 4.5.2** The Council addressed the Governance Questions Nos 1 – 8 (Page 5 of the AGAR) answering each in the affirmative, question 9 is not applicable. The Chairman & Clerk agreed to sign page 5.
- 4.5.3** The Council approved the Accounting Statements 2019/20 (Page 6 of the AGAR) previously signed by the RFO.
- 4.5.4** The Council approved the Certificate of Exemption (Page 3 of the AGAR) which the RFO & Chairman agreed to sign.
- 4.5.5** The Council recorded a vote of thanks to Robert Watson Jones for conducting the internal audit, without charge. The Clerk was asked to write a note of thanks to Mr Watson Jones.

Action Clerk (done)

5. Update on A519: Nothing further to add than the comments in item 3.

6. Matters requiring attention in the Parish: Cllr Carver advised that the lane through Meretown had been completely resurfaced in the last few days. Whilst he was sure it was much appreciated by all local residents he noted that the preparation at the edges had been poor. Now that the surplus grit has been removed some potholes had already appeared. Cllr Winnington advised that contractors should be held to account and it was our responsibility to flag up these issues. Cllr Hammond advised that he had already reported that the stretch of road in front of the church had not been done. Cllr Winnington asked that Cllr Carver emailed him directly with the images and committed to following this up. Cllr Spencer asked at what stage the road markings would be restored and was advised that this would normally take place following inspection as part of the contract. **Action Cllr Carver**

7. Any other business: Still unable to rearrange litter pick.

Cllr Winnington advised that the County Council had been working tirelessly on their COVID-19 response and that they were now moving into the recovery phase. Specific challenges had been hospitals and care homes and distributing food parcels and there would be a lot of work to be done in the community going forward.

Cllr Farrington confirmed that 25 million pounds had been distributed via schemes to support local businesses. Schools and children returning to education was still being debated along with reopening Stafford gatehouse. Stafford Castle had re-opened to visitors on foot but, as yet, no vehicles. Leisure facilities, golf courses and tennis courts are reopening and garden waste collections, temporarily suspended due to staff self-isolating have now been

restored. The council is now extensively using Microsoft Teams for virtual meetings and the change in Mayor had been deferred with the next meeting now scheduled for September.

- 8. Correspondence:** Cllr Toon had emailed concerns two parishioners had raised with him regarding raw sewage run-off seeping up through tarmac flowing down Sutton Lane towards Sutton barns entirely covering the road in some places. The clerk explained that she had called Severn Trent on receipt of the email earlier today. She established that this had actually been reported on 14th May by someone else (they could not disclose who) and that Severn Trent had visited and confirmed they had no sewage pipes in the vicinity and that all properties in that area had septic tanks. Severn Trent therefore advised the clerk to raise this issue with Environmental Health. Cllr Smith asked that he and Cllr Farrington to be copied into this to ensure it was dealt with promptly. **Action Clerk**

- 9. Date of Next Meetings:**
- Wednesday 22nd July 2020**
 - Wednesday 18th November 2020**
 - Wednesday 10th March 2021**
 - Wednesday 12th May 2021**

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at **7:35 p.m.**