

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting 7:00pm Wednesday 9th March 2022

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

Borough Cllr: M Smith

County Cllr: M Winnington arrived during item 7

In attendance: C Little (Clerk)

Members of the public were also present.

1. Apologies for absence:

Borough Cllr. P Farrington

2. Declaration of Councillors' Personal Interests:

Cllr Hammond declared his interest in the Church regarding the distribution of the concurrent grants.

3. Minutes of Meeting 17th November 2021 – matters arising not on this agenda:

All matters arising are on the agenda. Minutes were agreed and signed.

4. Official Information in private accounts:

Whilst it was confirmed at the last meeting that the parish council could not be allocated official email accounts, there had been several reports from councillors receiving spam emails purporting to be from former councillors. Parish councillors' emails have been available in the public domain on the website since it was set up, however; Cllr Carver established that this was not necessary as contact could be made via email to the clerk. Councillor's personal emails have now been removed from the website.

5. Councillor vacancies:

Two members of the public in attendance had applied to be co-opted to the council Angus Hawkins and Rachael Udall had both submitted written applications and were proposed as parish councillors by Cllr Hammond and seconded by Cllr Carver. The Chairman welcomed both to the parish council. It was agreed that the remaining vacancy be carried forward.

The clerk agreed to approach the third applicant to confirm that he was still interested ahead of the next meeting and arrange acceptance of office forms for the two new councillors.

ACTION: CLERK

6. Financial report and authority for payments:

6.1 2021/2022 Quarter Four

The financial statement dated 2nd March 2022 was presented to the meeting. It balanced to the latest bank statements received.

Account	£	p
Current @ 02 March 2021 (on-line)	110.00	
Reserve @ 02 March 2021 (on-line)	1120.41	
TOTAL	£1230.41	

The council approved and the chairman signed the Q4 financial statement.

6.2 Precept Payments for Approved

Precept Payments	Budget	For Approval
Clerk's Salary – quarter 4	(gross) £110.54	£88.34
PAYE as calculated by the payroll provider	nil	£22.20
Clerk's Expenses – quarter 4 - TBA	£15.00	nil
Parish Hall Rent for 2022 calendar year	£135.00	£135.00
SPCA subscription 2022/23 (April - March)	£99.00	£101.30

The council approved the above payments and authorised the RFO to make them.

ACTION: RFO

6.3 Banking

At the last meeting it was agreed to update the bank mandate and that has now become more necessary than ever following recent resignations. The RFO had prepared most of the paperwork to 1) remove the names of resigned Cllrs Toon and Tomkinson and 2) add the name of Cllr Spencer which will give us 3 signatories (any 2 being required to make payments). To enable completion of this work the council agreed the formal resolution for NatWest Bank as follows:

It was resolved that:

The Authorised Signatories in the current mandate, for the accounts detailed in section 1.3, be changed in accordance with section Authorised Signatories.

And the current mandate will continue as amended.

ACTION: RFO

6.4 Concurrent Grants

The Council had received just one application for grant from the Parochial Church Council asking for grant aid to help with 1) upkeep of the churchyard and 2) some external building maintenance. After a short discussion it was agreed to grant £135.00 to the PCC for each of the purposes just outlined.

ACTION: RFO

6.5 Accountability and Governance

The RFO informed the council that because gross income and gross expenditure are both below £25k it is able to self-certify that it is exempt from requiring a limited assurance review (external audit).

The Council therefore self-certified that it was exempt from requiring a limited assurance review.

This will allow the RFO to complete the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Part 2 once it is issued.

6. Update on A519 safer road campaign:

The clerk confirmed that she had written to Diane Firkin of Staffordshire Highways asking if the result of the police investigation into the fatal accident had been received. She had also advised her that councillors had requested a reduction in the speed limit to 30mph. To date no reply had been received. Cllr Winnington advised that police reports were taking a considerable time. He asked that the clerk write to Diane Firkin for an update and copy him in. Cllr Smith advised that a similar application had been made in Woodseaves to extend their 30mph zone, however the county councils view is that if the parish wants it, they need to fund it. Cllr Hammond advised that the decision on the speed of the road had been made before the fatality and this, and the police report would need to be considered by the county council.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Winnington observed that the A519 from the windmill was in a poor state of repair, the recent resurfacing in Sutton only serving to emphasise the fact. Cllr Spencer asked if the resurfacing was to be extended down the A519 to Forton. Cllr Winnington believed so but asked the clerk to write to him and he would check.

He would also raise the state of the overgrown path running along the same stretch of road and the road signs which had not been cleaned as requested. Cllr Spencer advised that a landowner's contractor had shredded the 'Forton' and 40mph signs whilst hedge cutting. This also needed referring to the county council for them to decide what action to take. The clerk agreed to write to Cllr Winnington.

ACTION: CLERK

7. Red Lion Sutton update:

Cllr Smith had circulated notification of the appeal regarding the listing of the Red Lion as an asset of community value. The appeal is being heard by the General Regulatory Chamber of HM Courts and Tribunals Service, based in Leicester. The Tribunal has fixed a hearing date for the appeal, for 31 March at 10am.

8. Matters requiring attention in the Parish:

Two instances of fly-tipping on A519 were reported. One at the side of the road and one at the entrance to private land on the other side of the road. Unfortunately, a vehicle had driven over the bags on private land causing the rubbish to be strewn around the surrounding area. The clerk agreed to contact Streetscene regarding the rubbish on the public highway but could not arrange removal of that on private land.

ACTION: CLERK

9. Platinum Jubilee:

Councillor Spencer advised that some residents were looking at the possibility of a street party but that the parish council itself had no plans. Cllr Smith advised that should any of the villages request a road closure for an event there would be no charge from the borough council.

10. The Golden Triangle:

Cllr Carver had attended a meeting and shared its contents with councillors ahead of the meeting. He outlined the proposed walking/cycling route being led by Cllr Tim Nelson (Newport). The plan is to link up Gnosall, Norbury, Sutton, Forton and Newport with a circular route about the length of a half-marathon. Councillors discussed this at length and agreed that in principle it was a good idea. It may also be an opportunity to get pedestrians away from the narrow footway on the A519 if the public footpath from Forton to Sutton via Windswell pool was made suitable. However, our parish would not be able to contribute financially and crossing the A41 at Meretown would be extremely dangerous without huge investment. Cllr Carver agreed to write to the organisers to feedback the parish observations.

11. Planning Application 21/35075/COU Meretown Cottage:

Cllr Spencer explained the application was for a strip of land to create rear access to the property. Cllr Carver, who lives at a neighbouring property, stated that he would have no objection as long as the walls were preserved and any hedges moved for visibility splays were replanted. Cllr Smith stated that this would be a requirement. The clerk agreed to reply to planners.

ACTION: CLERK

Cllr Hammond advised that we had also been asked to discuss planning application 21/33760/FUL Radmore Lane Land North of Humesford Brook. Councillors discussed this but did not feel they had anything to add beyond their two previous submissions and that it was for the planners to make their decision.

Meeting closed 8:18pm

Date of next meeting 11th May 2022