

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday 21st November 2018 at 7:00 in Forton Parish Rooms

PRESENT: Cllrs: S Tomkinson (Chair), D Toon (Vice Chair) D Carver (RFO),
E DeQuincey, P Hammond, J Perks
Borough Cllr M Smith, County Cllr M Winnington
C Little (Clerk)
Not present: S Spencer

1. **Apologies for Absence:** Apologies accepted from Cllr Williamson
2. **Declaration of Councillors' personal interests:** None
3. **Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 25th July 2018 and matters arising not on this agenda:** Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

4. Financial report and authority for payment

4.1 2018/2019 Quarter Three: The financial statement dated 07 November 2018 was presented. It balanced to the latest bank statements received: -

Current Account @ 05 November 2018	110.00
Reserve Account @ 05 November 2018	1,056.47
TOTAL	£1,166.47

There were no questions and the statement was approved by the council and signed by the chairman.

4.2 Payments for Approval

Precept Payments	Budget £ p	Agreed to Pay
Clerk's Salary – 3rd quarter *(gross)	105.82	£105.82
Clerk's Expenses – 3rd quarter	15.00	nil

*The gross salary is £105.82, PAYE being determined by the payroll service.

The council approved the above payment.

4.3 Budget 2019/2020: An estimated year-end statement was presented predicting a closing balance of £684.83. This was used as the opening balance on the draft budget which was also presented. The draft budget required a precept of £976.00 (last year £990.00). Note that the precept includes government Council Tax Support Grant of £36.65 (last year £29.44).

Year	Annual Precept £
2017-2018	894
2018-2019	990
2019-2020	976

Salaries and Insurance had been increased in line with the Government's Consumer Prices Index (CPI – All items) which in October 2018 stood at +2.2%. The general contingency was preserved at 15% (£177.00) and the reserve at £300.00. The budget was then discussed and agreed by the council without amendment, it was then signed by the chairman.

Stafford Borough Council had not yet announced its concurrent grant level but the budget assumed that it would remain the same as last year, £270 (2 x £135) and the parish council would request the maximum. The council then authorised the RFO to ask SBC for the maximum concurrent grant.

ACTION: RFO

4.4 Concurrent Grants: The council was reminded that any Concurrent Grants for the current year must be made by 31 March 2018 or be forfeit back to Stafford Borough Council. The council agreed to encourage applications that will be considered at the next meeting on 13 March 2019.

5. Update on A519 Safer Road Campaign: It was noted with regret that no progress had been made on either the road or the footpath concerns.

Regarding the road, Councillors had still not received the results of the speed monitoring undertaken in 2017. Cllr Toon reported yet another accident involving a white van which hit a wall on one side of the road and kept going for another 50 yards before colliding with a wall on the opposite side of the road.

Regarding the footpath the clerk confirmed that she had recently reported this online again as the footpath from the Swan Public House towards Sutton was now barely visible. In the request she had referred to the previous request a year ago. This had been declined due to

the initiative encouraging the community to undertake these tasks themselves but she pointed out that this was inappropriate in this case. She stated that she had also submitted images to County Cllr Winnington and asked for his support.

Cllr Hammond stated that he had recently walked the path to distribute leaflets in the parish and had been terrified by the perilous conditions. Overgrown hedges were causing a significant hazard. Cllr Hammond agreed to contact the tenant of one area and the clerk agreed to write to a local farm.

Cllr Toon stated that whilst the A519 had a closure recently, only allowing vehicles for access, he had successfully cleared a significant stretch of the pathway in Sutton and removed the weeds in the gutter. However it was agreed that it would not be safe to attempt this in normal circumstances on such a busy A road.

Councillors agreed that the clerk should send a letter, by recorded delivery, to the Chief Executive of the County Council with a view to a site visit and to raise the profile of both concerns.

County Cllr Winnington arrived at the meeting at this point and was briefed on the discussion around agenda item 5. He reiterated the financial pressures faced by the Council but stated that should the Government release the promised funding he would endeavour to escalate our case. In the meantime he suggested that an application should be made to the Safer Roads Partnership to attempt to secure funding for signage to alert speeding drivers.

ACTION: The clerk agreed to submit the application via Cllr Winnington.

- 6. Superfast fibre access broadband** Following on from the last meeting regarding Staffordshire Superfast where Cllr Carver explained that the Community Fibre Partnership might contribute 50% provided the community contributed the other 50% to provide better broadband provision in Meretown; he had made contact with Meretown residents to determine the level of interest this proposition. Only four households said they wanted improvement and only three of these were prepared to consider a financial contribution. This was insufficient to make a case to CFP. CFP said it would consider including Forton if this brought in more contributors and Cllr Hammond agreed to approach local some residents. County Cllr Winnington suggested it might be worthwhile having a further conversation with Superfast Staffordshire and Cllr Carver agreed to undertake this.

ACTION: Cllr Carver

7. Appointment of Trustees for Forton Charities Cllr Hammond confirmed that at the end of their terms of office both existing trustees, Karen Greenwood and Marion Robinson, were prepared to continue for a further term. This was approved by Councillors.

ACTION: Clerk to confirm this in an email to Cllr Hammond.

8. Mirrors on Sutton Crossroads Cllr Toon reported that the convex safety mirror installed by a local resident some years ago has been stolen making the crossroads precarious to exit from the North. A kind villager, mindful of the danger, has installed a wardrobe door with a mirror on it in its place. Whilst this is serving a purpose, it could also cause a distraction to motorists navigating the bend. Cllr Toon asked if it would be possible for the Council to replace the mirror in the interests of safety. Cllr Winnington advised that generally mirrors were not provided but would contact the Highways Department.

ACTION: Clerk to take image and lodge request

9. Collaboration Meeting 25th October: Councillors Carver, Tomkinson, Toon and Winnington attended this meeting. Whilst it was agreed that the meetings were often used as an opportunity for parish councillors to air their frustrations to the County and Borough Council, Cllr Winnington said that it was useful to have these concerns escalated first hand. All members agreed that this was still a useful forum and that collaboration was often beneficial. Cllr Winnington stated that one of the areas of concern in local villages is the poor state of drainage gullies. He indicated that should the revenue come through from the government, addressing these issues would be a priority.

10. Matters requiring attention in the Parish: None declared.

11. Any other business: Cllr Tomkinson reminded Councillors that terms of office were due to expire next year and elections would take place in May. He requested that the clerk bring the relevant documents to the March meeting.

There was a discussion about the validity of a small parish council like ours having such little authority. Cllr Smith observed that if it did not exist the residents in our community would have no voice. The opportunity to collaborate and combine resources could be a way forward.

March 17th 2019 was set for a community litter pick.

ACTION: The clerk to liaise with Richard Upton.

12. Correspondence: Planning Application 18/25980/HOU was considered. There were no objections raised.

13. Date of next Meeting: 7:00pm Wednesday 13th March 2019

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at **8:25 p.m.**