

# FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

Held at Forton Parish Rooms at 7:00 p.m.

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

Borough Cllrs: P Farrington.

Mr David Frost and one other member of the Save the Red Lion Community Action Group (STRLCAG) were also present.

C Little (Clerk).

- 2. Apologies for Absence:** None received.

Councillor Smith and Councillor Winnington did not attend.

- 3. Declaration of Councillors' Personal Interests:** None declared.

- 4. Minutes of Meeting 5<sup>th</sup> May 2021 & matters arising not on this agenda:**

Minutes agreed and signed. No matters arising.

- 5. Councillor Vacancy:** The clerk confirmed that the vacancy had been advertised and there had been no expressions of interest. The Borough Council had confirmed in writing, that the parish council could now co-opt to fill the vacancy. Councillor Spencer advised that he had held speculative discussions with a neighbour who has recently moved into the parish. Whilst she had hoped to attend the meeting to observe she had been delayed. Councillor Spencer agreed to speak to her again ahead of the next meeting.

- 6. Financial Report and Authority for Payments:**

- 6.1 Quarter Two 2021/2022: The financial statement dated 14<sup>th</sup> July 2021 was presented. It balanced to the latest bank statements received with a closing balance of £789.78

BANK STATEMENT RECONCILIATION	£ p
Current Account Statement @ 05 July 2021	110.00
Reserve Account Statement @ 05 July 2021	679.78
Reconciliation TOTAL	<b>789.78</b>

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## 6.2 Payments Approved

Precept Payments	Budget £ p	Actual £ p
Clerk's Salary – 2nd quarter	110.54 gross	88.34 net
PAYE	nil	22.20
Clerk's Expenses – 2nd quarter	15.00	nil

## 6.3 Annual Audit 2020/2021

The Internal Audit was completed on the 20<sup>th</sup> April, as reported at the last meeting and no external audit is required. The Annual Governance and Accountability Return has been on the website since 7<sup>th</sup> May together with the notice of Local Government Electors Rights (the right to view papers closed on 21st June). There have been no requests to view.

## 6.4 Banking

The RFO is requesting NatWest to make the bank accounts (Current & Reserve) available online. At present the only way they can be accessed is by telephone via the NatWest call centre. This service has become progressively slower over the years. At the time of writing, application has been made for Peter Hammond, Stephen Tomkinson and David Carver to be on the new mandate (as they each are at present). Once the accounts are operating online, it is proposed to add Steve Spencer, who has said he is willing to be added to the mandate. The RFO informed councillors that because NatWest does not accommodate dual authorisation of payments with online business accounts he would not use the online payments facility but continue to use cheques, as at present. Cllr Hammond suggested that the council might make a resolution to control how the bank account may be operated in future. This was agreed and a resolution would be drafted for consideration.

**ACTION: RFO & Cllr Hammond**

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- 7 Update on A519 Safer Road Campaign:** – Still waiting on resurfacing works to commence and to request clearance of rubbish alongside the road whilst traffic control is in place.
- 8 Red Lion Inn, Sutton – Update:** – David Frost (Save the Red Lion Community Action Group) advised that the new owner of the Red Lion, Richard Sanders has appealed against the Stafford Borough Council decision to make it an Asset of Community Value. The notification of the appeal had been sent by the tribunal to a different Forton Parish Council in error and this only became apparent last week when the email from the tribunal, dated 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021 was received by the Chairman. In it we were invited to be joined to the appeal as the formal applicant. However; we are now out of the original time limit (8<sup>th</sup> July) set by the tribunal and have not yet heard that the time limit has been reset.

David Frost went on to answer questions regarding the level of support in the parish (330 plus on FaceBook) and how much potential funding might be expected when and if the pub becomes available for purchase once again. He was confident that there would be sufficient support and money when the time came. He went on to say that STRLCAG had already paid the consultant, Dale Ingram to produce a written representation for both parties at no cost to the parish council. The Council, as on the previous occasion, would receive a nil value invoice from 'Planning 4 Pubs' recording its interest in the matter.

After lengthy discussion it was agreed that with the high level of support in the Parish and surrounding area supporting STRLCAG to varying degrees, that councillors should recognise this and support the parishioners. However; Cllr Hammond pointed out that we should have sight of the tribunal documents before making a formal commitment. This was agreed.

David Frost read the document and the Chairman agreed to circulate it at the end of the meeting. Cllrs were asked to respond to him by the following morning of 22<sup>nd</sup> July to confirm how they wished to proceed.

**ACTION: All Councillors**

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**9 Matters Requiring Attention in the Parish:** – Noticeboards: Cllr Farrington advised that as every household does not have access to the internet, noticeboards might be the only way for some people in the parish to access information about the parish council. Cllrs felt that they should be retained if possible. Cllr Baynton agreed to make some enquiries about repairs and to see if we could secure community assistance or funding to restore/replace the boards particularly the one in Sutton.

**Action: Cllr Baynton**

**10 Concerns for Walkers Crossing A41 - Update:** - The clerk confirmed that she had written to Newport Town Council with images of the existing road sign and raised our concerns. She advised she has had a response from the clerk saying this will be referred to Town Councillors. Cllr Hammond advised that due to the proximity of the county boundary it was going to be difficult to resolve this issue. The clerk advised that we had at least made the town council aware of the situation even if it did not resolve the safety issue.

**11 Correspondence:** – We had received notification, in generic form, from the Information Commissioner's Office about official information held in private email accounts.

Cllr Farrington suggested that the clerk contact Ian Curran at Stafford Borough Council to clarify best practice for our parish.

**Action: Clerk**

Meeting ended 7:53 p.m.

**Date of Next Meeting:** 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. 7:00 p.m. Parish Rooms