

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of Meeting Held Wednesday 8th May 2019 at 7:00 in Forton Parish Rooms

PRESENT:

Cllrs. E De Quincey (Chairman), D Toon (Vice Chair), D Carver (RFO) & P Hammond

Borough Cllrs. M Smith & P Farrington

County Cllr. M Winnington (arrived during item 3)

C Little (Clerk)

1. Apologies for Absence:

None

2. Declaration of Councillor's Personal Interests:

None declared.

3. Minutes of Meeting held on Wednesday 13th March 2019 and matters arising not on this Agenda:

Minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman.

Cllr. Toon advised that he had recently spoken to the nursery school proprietor who is the main tenant of Forton Parish Rooms. She advised that she would be prepared to bid for funding for the windows which are in need of restoration/repair. This information will be passed to the parish hall committee.

4. Financial Report and Authority for Payment:

4.1 2018/2019 Year-End - 31 March 2019

The financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2019 was presented. It balanced to the bank statements covering the year-end with a closing balance of £685.60. It was explained that it is this statement that provides the information for page 6 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR), (See paragraph 5 below). The statement was agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

4.2 2019/2020 Quarter One

The financial statement for 2019/2020 Quarter 1, dated 01 May 2019 was presented. It balanced to the latest bank statements received with a closing balance of £1,308.70, the first tranche of £623.00, Precept, Council Tax Grant and Concurrent monies having been received from Stafford Borough Council on 08 April.

The statement was agreed as a true record and signed by the chairman.

4.3 Insured Risks

The council uses its annual insurance renewal procedure to act as its risk assessment. Councillors had all received Came and Company, the council broker's renewal offer which presented 3 insurance companies for consideration: Ecclesiastical, Inspire & Hiscox. Hiscox was quickly eliminated on grounds of cost and Ecclesiastical was selected against Inspire because Ecclesiastical had proved satisfactory for a number of years, was the same annual cost as Inspire but additionally offered a small discount in return for a 3 years Long Term agreement (LTA).

The council then went on to consider the Ecclesiastical Policy Schedule in some detail. It was agreed that it covered all the risks that councillors envisaged and consequently it was agreed to take up the Ecclesiastical offer without amendment. It was further agreed to take advantage of the LTA discount by agreeing to remain with Ecclesiastical for the next 3 years; 01 June 2019 to 31 May 2022.

4.4 Payments Approved

The following payments were approved: -

Precept Payments	Budget	Agreed to Pay
	£ p	£ p
*Clerk's Salary (gross) – 1 st quarter	108.15	108.15
Clerk's expenses	TBA	nil
SPCA subscription 2019/20	100.16	98.00
Ecclesiastical Insurance premium 2019/20	294.81	330.00
**Parish Hall rent for 2019/20	125.00	125.00

*Tax Code awaited from HMRC before payment actually made

** Invoice expected but not yet received

ACTION: RFO to make payments

4.5 Annual Audit 2018/2019

The RFO reported that audit needed to be completed by 05 July this year but also that for the first time, the return would not be sent to the external auditor but only had to be published on the council's website. It was still a requirement to post the notice for the exercise of electors' right to inspect the accounts and records and that notice was ready to be displayed, subject to completion of the audit at this meeting. The period for allowing examination would be from Monday 03 June 2019 to Friday 12 July 2019.

4.5.1 The council was presented with the Internal Audit Report, (page 4 of the AGAR) and noted that it was a clean report with no observations or recommendations.

4.5.2 The council then addressed the Governance Questions Nos 1 – 8 (Page 5 of the AGAR) and was able to answer those questions in the affirmative with question 9 being non-applicable. The clerk and the chairman then signed page 5.

4.5.3 The council then approved the Accounting Statements 2018/19 (Page 6 of the AGAR) already signed by the RFO. The chairman then signed page 6.

4.5.4 The RFO told the council that the internal audit had once again been undertaken, free of charge, by Mr Robert Watson Jones. The RFO proposed a vote of thanks to Mr Watson Jones which was unanimously supported.

ACTION: Clerk to please write a note of thanks to Mr Watson Jones

4.5.5 The RFO also told the council that the payroll service was still being provided, free of charge, by Mrs Sandra Hockenhull. The RFO proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs Hockenhull which was unanimously supported.

ACTION: Clerk to please write a note of thanks to Mrs Hockenhull

5. Update on A519 Safer Road Campaign:

Following the Highways meeting he attended on 03 April, Cllr. Winnington explained that funding for projects like improving safety on the A519 had been shelved as the County Council had a £35m black hole which they had spent the second half of 2018 addressing. However the final Government resource grant was better than expected allowing cabinet at Staffordshire to invest an extra £5m back into the roads portfolio. Each Councillor was allocated £20,000 towards local priorities. Cllr. Winnington advised that he had allocated his share towards work on the Forton A519 footpath and targeting gulley emptying within his Division. Whilst he did not anticipate that this would cover all the work required he hoped it would achieve some improvement in safety and asked for Councillors to confirm which area was the biggest priority. Cllr. Toon volunteered to take some photographs to indicate the areas causing most concern.

ACTION: Cllr Toon to take photographs

6. Matters requiring attention in the Parish:

Cllr. Carver advised that a significant pothole situated in Meretown had been reported to the Highways Department more than two months previously. However it had not been attended for assessment by the Council despite being logged for several weeks. He reported that a local resident had purchased some tarmac and instigated their own repair.

Cllr. Carver also said that he had been informed by Superfast Staffordshire that there has been a slight delay to the fibre broadband to Forton box 27, with the completion of the installation now expected in August 2019.

Following the resignation of John Perks, Councillors asked the clerk to write and thank him for his commitment and contribution to the parish over the last 15 years. (Cllr. since March 2004).

Cllr. Hammond reminded everyone of the need to now co-opt a new councillor and that the process would be easier done sooner rather than later. Cllr. Spencer agreed to approach a resident he felt may be interested.

ACTION: Clerk to write to John Perks and Cllr Spencer to approach resident

7. **Any other business:**

Cllr. De Quincey advised that it was now possible to secure a free composting bin which involved just paying for the cost of delivery. Application should be made from the following website:-

<http://www.staffordshirenewsroom.co.uk/staffordshire-residents-urged-get-composting-free-bins/>.

8. **Correspondence:**

The clerk advised that all correspondence had been circulated electronically ahead of the meeting.

9. **Dates of Next Meetings:**

Wednesday 24 July 2019

Wednesday 20 November 2019

Wednesday 11 March 2020

Wednesday 13 May 2020 (AGM followed by parish council meeting)

All at 7:00 p.m.

The meeting was closed by the Chairman at **8:10 p.m.**