

Forncett Parish Council  
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council  
held remotely on Thursday 18 February 2021 at 7.30pm.

In Attendance: Cllr B Frith (Chairman) Cllr B Humphreys, Cllr A Coleman, Cllr G Barnes, Cllr D Welsby, Cllr S Allen, Cllr D Bezkorowajny

Parish Clerk Anne Rayner  
District Councillor Barry Duffin  
County Councillor Bev Spratt  
8 members of the public

Before the meeting started, the Chairman reported the extremely sad news that Derek Hill passed away having been admitted to hospital with Covid. Derek was well known as our very smart barman at many village hall events and he was often seen litter picking on his many long walks around the village and on 'litter pick' days. He also helped with footpath maintenance, preparations for fetes and other events and regular safety checks on the Village Hall defibrillator. He will be missed very much by many friends and neighbours but of course, mostly by his family, to whom the parish council would like to extend condolences.

1. **To consider apologies for absence** – None to report.
2. **To receive any declarations of interest** – None to report.
3. **To approve the minutes of the last meeting (21 January 2021)** – The minutes were approved without alteration and signed as correct by the Chairman.
4. **To consider matters arising from the minutes (for information only)** – The document regarding a possible new train station 'near Long Stratton' has been circulated. The parish council will presumably get an opportunity to comment on this matter if Network Rail, Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council decide to take the matter further.
5. **Open forum, to hear from members of the public, including reports from District and County Councillors** – County Councillor Bev Spratt said that most items of interest, flooding, Austhorpe House and possible new train station were already on the agenda, so he would wait to hear about those items. Councillor Spratt did report that Norfolk County Council have agreed to increase council tax by 4%, a decision which he was disappointed by, given the impact on many peoples finances due to the covid pandemic.  
District Councillor Barry Duffin agreed that he had little to add for the time being, other than to confirm that the District Council elections on 6 May 2021 will be going ahead, with the Police Crime & Commissioner elections (postponed from last year) also taking place on the same day.
6. **Forncett Conservation Area consultation** – The draft consultation document was circulated prior to the meeting. Steve Beckett, Heritage Officer, from South Norfolk Council was present to briefly run through the document. Steve confirmed that it was prepared in order to update the last appraisal of the Conservation area, which took place in the 1990s. Steve walked round the village around this time last year with representatives of the parish council and District

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Councillor Barry Duffin, in order to reassess the area. Members of the Forncett History Group were also consulted and Steve thanked them for their input, as well as Graham and May Prior for their input relating to Forncett St Mary Church. The draft document includes maps from approximately 100 years ago, together with current maps; suggested changes; green areas and open spaces; historic buildings. Steve hoped that the document reflected the unique nature of the Forncetts and added that the consultation is open until 15 March 2021, so there is plenty of time to comment.

Parish councillors and members of the public present suggested some other areas which may be suitable for inclusion:

- Low Road north of Cheney's Lane up to the area of Yew Tree Farmhouse which includes some impressive listed buildings and overlooks the Tas Valley.
- An area of Cheney's Lane from the Croft to Hill Farm.
- The side of Mill Road extending upwards from the school.

A member of the public also noted that an area proposed for removal was on her land but that she had not previously been aware that it was within the Conservation Area.

The parish council passed on their thanks to Steve, the document is comprehensive and feedback already received from residents has been positive. Steve confirmed he will take another look at the additional suggested areas and will let the parish council know of any amendments.

**7. To consider planning applications:**

**a) To welcome Mr A Russell (applicant) to the meeting and to consider: 2021 / 0191 – Austhorpe House, Norwich Rd – Part demolition of existing building and conversion and extension of remaining into 3 dwellings. Erection of semi detached dwellings to rear, with associated works and new access onto Common Rd** – The Chairman confirmed that the draft plans, published on the Forncett village website, were viewed in excess of 200 times. The Chairman introduced Andrew Russell (applicant) and invited him to talk about the main points of the planning application. Andrew confirmed that the barn will be refurbished and sold as a single dwelling. For the remainder of the site, the two 'modern' wings will be removed from the main building and the residual building will be converted in to three terrace properties, with an aim of retaining the main features. In addition, the plans are for four houses to be built in the gardens. Andrew confirmed he is keeping in touch with Forncett History Group during the renovations. Councillors confirmed they had **no objections** to the plans.

**b) 2021 / 0208 – The Old Vineyard, Overwood Lane – Revised layout for the relocation of a steel container and erection of a welfare block** – Following discussion, the parish council agreed that, whilst there are no objections as such to the welfare building, they would support the comments made by Great Moulton Parish Council suggesting that a site visit be made to check all aspects of the development.

**c) 2021 / 0175 – Garden House, Aslacton Rd – Proposed replacement of existing pool shed with more up to date facility** – The parish council have **no objections** to this application.

**8. To hear of planning decisions and other information:**

**a) GNLP consultation** – The current document does not include proposals for villages in South

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Norfolk. District Councillor Barry Duffin said there is still more work to be done on this aspect of the plan. Councillor Duffin reminded everyone that when the sites are published, landowners will still need to go through the normal planning procedure if they wish to proceed with an application.

**9. To report planning comments agreed via e-mail in between meetings – None to report**

- 10. Christmas Eve Flooding – Update –** The Chairman reported that some meetings have already taken place between interested parties and representatives from the Norfolk Water Management team should be visiting the site next week. Councillor Humphreys noted with great disappointment that a recent article in the Diss Mercury seemed to indicate that landowners were to blame for recent flooding, citing lack of land management, but those present felt that the issues were directly caused by a lack of maintenance of the river itself. Councillor Humphreys felt strongly that a lack of action taken by both the Environment Agency and NCC Highways (relating to ongoing issues around Wash Lane) has built up over several years, with the flooding at Christmas being the result. However, the Environment Agency have now advised NCC Highways that they need to assess the ford on Wash Lane and County Councillor Bev Spratt suggested that the Chairman contact Graham Bygrave (NCC Highways) asking for a clear plan of action. Although flooding has been in the news recently, with Lord Dannatt being appointed as Chair of the new Norfolk Flooding Alliance, all those present agreed that action is needed without delay. Affected residents thanks Councillors for their efforts and reiterated that the goodwill from residents has been hugely appreciated but agreed that action is needed.
- It was agreed that the Chairman will contact Graham Bygrave (NCC) and will keep Councillors and residents informed of any progress as and when it happens. **Action BF.**

- 11. To consider appealing for a reduction to the speed limit for Cheney's Lane – Cllr** Bezkorowajny mentioned his concerns regarding Cheney's Lane at the last meeting, the main issue being the fact that it is a single track road with no footpaths, it is well used by walkers and cyclists and yet, for the most part, has a speed limit of 60mph. Due to the lack of verges and high banks at certain points, there is no possibility of walkers getting safely out of the way, should they need to. Councillor Bezkorowajny pointed out that this seems at odds with sections of Long Stratton and Tharston which have wide pavements and street lighting but have a 20mph speed limit. Following discussion, Councillors were broadly supportive of taking any steps possible to improve the road safety in the village but felt that they would like to look at the village as a whole and not just concentrate on Cheney's Lane. It was agreed that the clerk would contact Norfolk County Council to see what options are available. County Councillor Bev Spratt suggested Tom McCabe as a contact and asked to be copied in to the email. **Action AR.**

- 12. Arrangements for Annual Meetings and future meetings of the Parish Council –** Last year, due to the Covid 19 pandemic outbreak, there was no Annual Parish Meeting. Norfolk ALC have confirmed that there is a requirement for this to be held this year and the Chairman suggested it is held prior to the April Parish Council meeting. Whilst noting that the usual clubs and groups will probably have little to report it would be good to hear from everyone and perhaps hear about their plans for when lockdown eases. The Chairman will appeal for

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reports via the Flyer. The Annual Meeting of the Parish Council will be the usual May parish council meeting date.

**13. To receive the RFO report and consider the approval of the following payments:**

Ch. No.	Amount	Payee	Notes
SO	£ 351.23	A Rayner	February salary
DD	£ 52.68	A J Bell	February pension contribution
BACS	£ 250.00	M Chapman	Allotment rent
BACS	£ 50.00	Norfolk Citizens Advice	Donation

The financial report, circulated prior to the meeting, was approved. All payments were also approved.

**14. To consider correspondence:**

**a) Request for donation from Norfolk Citizens Advice** – The parish council agreed to make a donation of £50 (included in the payment list above).

**15. Items for information and comment** – Surge testing is taking place in Diss and Roydon for the South African variant of Covid-19. Councillor Bezkorowajny reported increased fly tipping at a location on Spicers Lane. He agreed to photograph it when next walking past and send the photos to the clerk to assist a report to South Norfolk Council.

District Councillor Barry Duffin reminded everyone there is still time to register for a postal vote, in advance of the May 6<sup>th</sup> elections.

Finally, the Chairman advised that the parish council need to hold the meeting of the Trustees of the Parochial Charity and it was agreed this would take place immediately after the parish council meeting next month. Councillor Barnes agreed to take a look at the station Road land in order to be able to provide a brief report.

**16. To confirm the date of the next meeting as 18 March 2021 to be held remotely.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 21.15.