

Forncett Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
held remotely on Thursday 21 January 2021 at 7.30pm.

The

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
7 members of the public

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 (17 December 2020)** – 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 Chairman reported that most of the donated face visors have been distributed but there are a few left so please get in touch if you know of appropriate recipients.
5. **Open forum, to hear from members of the public, including reports from District and County Councillors** – District Councillor Barry Duffin reported that the SNC help hub is still extremely busy. If you are in need and you can't make immediate contact with them, they will get back to you but Councillor Duffin confirmed that any resident can always contact him. The Census planned for 21 March 2021 will be taking place and Councillor Duffin also confirmed that District elections are still planned for 6 May 2021. The ward grant deadlines have been extended. If you are aware of any qualifying groups or charities who may be interested, please get in touch with Councillor Duffin.
County Councillor Bev Spratt reported on a feasibility study surrounding the possibility of re-opening Forncett train station, tied in with the development of Long Stratton. Councillor Spratt reported that there has still not been a single case of covid at Forncett CEVA Primary school, which is still open for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. Councillor Spratt said he would wait to hear from residents regarding the Christmas Eve flooding, before he commented further. District Councillor Duffin confirmed the help hub have the most up to date information regarding the availability of sand bags.
6. **To consider planning applications:**
 - a) **2020 / 2445 & 2446 The Barn, Low Rd – Installation of two air source heat pumps** – The parish council have no objections to this application, subject to the satisfaction of the listed buildings officer.
7. **To hear of planning decisions and other information:**
 - a) **Draft ideas for Austhorpe House (in advance of planning application)** – The initial draft plans ideas have been published on the Forncett village website (www.forncett.info). The parish council and residents will have an opportunity to comment when a formal planning

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application has been submitted.

The SNC enforcement officer has contacted the owner of The Old Vineyard, Overwood Lane, regarding the building extension which is apparently unauthorised.

8. To report planning comments agreed via e-mail in between meetings:

a) 2020 / 2373 The Stables, Common Rd – Single storey extension to replace lean to porch. Demolition of first floor area, rebuild, internal & external alterations – No objections

9. Christmas Eve Flooding – Reports and follow up – The Chairman reported that he would give a summary of the situation before offering those affected an opportunity to speak about their experiences. Late on the evening of 23rd December and early on 24th December around 50mm of rain fell in just a few hours resulting in extensive flooding in several parts of the village. Emergency services rescued 19 people from properties on Aslacton Rd and at least eight properties were flooded internally and several remain uninhabitable. The Chairman passed on his thanks to all who helped out in the midst of the emergency and the many more who have offered practical help, accommodation, emergency supplies etc since then. Those living in the higher parts of the village were completely unaware of the full extent of the problems until some time later. The Chairman thanked fellow Councillors Dawn Welsby and Bev Humphreys (and family) who have both spent a lot of time both helping out practically but also in detailing the sequence of events, in the hope that the right steps can be taken to prevent a re-occurrence. An initial meeting a few days after the flood has ensured that all relevant agencies are aware and that those who investigate, report and take action are fully appraised. One meeting with staff from the Environment Agency has already given the opportunity to highlight particular problems and there is another meeting planned for next week. The Chairman asked if any residents present would like to speak and the following details are a summary of the main points mentioned:

- It was agreed that residents who have lived in the village for over 40 years plus have never known flooding to this extent
- One resident reported that the water hit so quickly and with such power that she was amazed that no lives were lost
- At 2.30am, with over 2ft of water inside some of the houses, the situation was so bad that the fire service could not actually reach the affected residents and they had to wait until 4.30 / 5 am before they could be evacuated.
- Multiple reports all confirm the same thing, that the water did not appear to be coming from the river, rather it came up the road.
- There is a strong feeling that the situation could have been prevented, or at least its effects lessened, if the relevant authorities had listened to requests for work to be carried out.
- The point was made that the railings on Wash Lane act almost as a dam.
- Residents unanimously felt that a full report is needed from Norfolk Fire & Rescue service. They hoped that, if this details the severity of the situation, other agencies will be compelled to act.
- Affected residents voiced their sincere thanks to those in the village. They reported that the help offered and the sense of community had been quite overwhelming.
- A resident reported that he was a part of a team that campaigned to have the river dredged some time ago and this campaign was ultimately successful, with the dredging

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taking place in 2009.

- The point was made that blocked ditches and saturated fields contributed to making the situation worse. As well as the river bursting its banks, water was pouring from saturated fields above Aslacton Road.

County Councillor Bev Spratt offered his sympathies to those affected and also voiced his frustration at the lack of maintenance works carried out by the relevant authorities. He acknowledged that, whilst some landowners would willingly undertake some of the work themselves, this is not allowed.

Parish Councillor Bev Humphreys felt that, without action, residents would be worrying every time heavy rainfall is forecast and that situation can't be allowed to happen.

Councillor Welsby also mentioned the blocked drains along Aslacton Road, several of which have been blocked for a considerable period and have been reported by a variety of people going back some time.

The Chairman concluded by confirming that everything possible would be done to ensure that the appropriate action is taken to hopefully prevent, or at least lessen, the chances of this happening again.

Unfortunately, from this point onwards in the meeting, the Chairman lost, or only had intermittent, internet signal. Vice-Chairman Bev Humphreys therefore took over the remainder of the meeting.

10. **To review the following policy: General Risk Management Policy** – The policy will be updated to reflect the correct dates of the Financial Regulations Policy and to also include the addition of electronic payments.
11. **To consider the allotment lease – update** – The parish council is still in contact with the landowner regarding negotiations for an extension to the current lease.
12. **To receive the RFO report and consider the approval of the following payments:**

Ch. No.	Amount	Payee	Notes
SO	£ 351.23	A Rayner	December salary
DD	£ 52.68	A J Bell	December pension contribution
BACS	£ 42.96	S Leavesley	Contribution to e-noticeboard

The financial report, circulated prior to the meeting, was approved and the listed payments were unanimously approved.

13. **To consider correspondence: Nothing to report.**
14. **Items for information and comment** – The only bookings at the village hall at the moment are playgroup and the Burger Van which serves take away food from the car park once a month. South Norfolk Council will no longer be distributing their bin calendars. There will be a notice in the Flyer this month about how you can get a printed copy if you would still like, one or you

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can access the information on the 'My South Norfolk' page of the South Norfolk Council website.

The surface water on Long Stratton Road just after Corner House Farm seems to be getting worse. This issue was reported last year and there is evidence of attempts at drainage but the situation is definitely worse. The clerk will report this.

Councillor Bezkorowajny asked if the parish council have any specific plans or projects for 2021 and, if not, could a campaign for a 20mph speed limit on Cheney's Lane be considered. It was agreed to have this as an agenda item next month.

15. To confirm the date of the next meeting as 18 February 2021 to be held remotely.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.