

Forncett Parish Council  
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council  
held at Forncett Village Hall on Thursday 20 October 2022 at 7.30pm

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

3 members of the public

Before the meeting began the Chairman reflected on the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, following a lifetime of service.

1. **To consider apologies for absence** – Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Bezkorowajny and the clerk. County and District Councillor, Barry Duffin, also sent his apologies.
2. **To receive any declarations of interest** – Councillor Barnes declared an interest in item 15 on the agenda.
3. **To approve the minutes of the last meeting (21 July 2022)** – 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 a request was published in the Flyer, asking for suggestions for suitable sites for benches around the village. No responses were received, however, the Chairman reminded everyone that the issue of new benches originally came up when discussing a replacement for the bench outside St Edmunds Church. The parish council agreed to put the litter pick money awarded in 2021 towards the bench but have actually recently heard that the 2022 funds have also been awarded to Forncett, a further payment of £200. This, together with a donation from the village hall committee and money collected from stallholders on the summer BBQ day, would almost pay for a good quality bench.
5. **Open forum, to hear from members of the public, also District & County Cllr** – On behalf of the County Council, Councillor Duffin sent a report which included information regarding large infrastructure projects such as the Long Stratton bypass and the Thickthorn interchange. The report also included a reminder that energy support grants will be paid automatically, residents do not need to apply for them. Unfortunately there already seem to be scams circulating regarding these payments.

With regard to the District Council, Councillor Duffin reported that the move to Horizon House is underway. South Norfolk House is being mothballed until sold and staff will be either working from home or from the Broadland Council offices until Horizon House is ready in January 2023. The Octagon in Diss, previously the information centre, will be open as a satellite centre, in order that residents can meet staff still on a local basis. There is some conflicting information as to whether the issue of nutrient neutrality, currently impacting planning applications, has been resolved. South Norfolk Council has a hardship fund, successful applicants will receive £150. Councillor Duffin also reported that the planning department are currently short staffed and are receiving a lot of applications, which will be

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dealt with as soon as possible.

**6. To consider planning applications:**

- a) **2022 / 1880 – The Granary, Northfield Rd – Increase hayloft & install pv panels** – This application was discussed at some length. Councillors objected to the application and agreed to reinforce and re-state comments made on the original application that this is overdevelopment of the site, the proposed building is disproportionate and the scale of the building is not appropriate in what was an open space.

**7. To hear of planning decisions:**

- a) **2022 / 1284 – Mill Cottage Annexe (see below) – Approved**

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

- a) **2022 / 1284 – Mill Cottage Annexe, Mill House, Long Stratton Rd – Conversion of outbuilding to hair salon** – No objection subject to the satisfaction of Highways.
- b) **2022 / 1047 – Rattles, Low Road – Roof repairs kitchen and bedroom** – No objection
- c) **2022 / 1358 – The Barn, Low Rd – Install 12 solar panels on kitchen roof** – No objection subject to the satisfaction of the listed buildings officer
- d) **2022 / 1695 – Norfolk Tank Museum, Station Road – Demolition of existing café building. Erection of new teaching building and extension of existing building creating new museum space, new toilets, kitchen and café** – The parish council in general welcome the improvements to the facilities for the café, toilets etc, but note the concern of the neighbour regarding height and proximity of parts of the planned development to the boundary. If there is an opportunity for the 'Education Building' to be sited elsewhere on the site where it is less intrusive, this may resolve any issues of overlooking or shadowing.
- e) **2022 / 1710 – The Granary, Northfield Rd – Add pv panels to roof of proposed garage** – No objection subject to issues raised by environmental team being resolved & the satisfaction of the Heritage Officer.
- f) **2022 / 1692 – The Granary, Northfield Rd – Undercover BBQ & seating area** – The parish council repeated concerns re overdevelopment at this site.

- 9. Summer mobile police van visits** – The Chairman reported that two visits took place in the village over the Summer. Although the dates of the visits were advertised, the times were not, meaning that perhaps they did not attract as many visitors as they would have liked.

- 10. To hear information regarding the Forncett.info website** – The Chairman gave a bit of background regarding the website, which has been looked after (and paid for) by a local resident for several years. The resident feels he would like the responsibility for the site to be taken over at some point in the not too distant future. The website is a fantastic resource, very well used. The issue was discussed, with a view to the parish council paying for the hosting of the site, thought to be approximately £100 per annum, but also perhaps looking for someone in the village to take over the running of the site. Councillors agreed to this proposal.

- 11. To consider the condition of the War Memorial** – Cllr Bezkorowajny keeps an eye on the

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War Memorial on behalf of the parish council. Other than some minor cracks in the pointing of the plinth, all seems Ok, but Cllr Humphreys has asked a professional memorial mason who lives in the village to look it over and report accordingly.

12. **To review the Grant Awarding Policy** – The current policy was reviewed and it was agreed to remove the self imposed limit of six donations to a maximum of £180 per year. The parish council can still include plans for a maximum amount of donations in one financial year within their budget but removing the fixed limit within the policy would allow more freedom, should suitable applications be received. Councillors resolved to amend the policy accordingly. **Action AR.**
13. **Warm spaces grant** – Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council have grants available for spaces in the community who feel able to set up ‘warm spaces’ to help residents through this winter. Please contact the clerk for further information.
14. **National Grid Pylons update** – The Chairman reported that Councillor Bezkorowajny had heard of a case whereby a group of parish councils in Norfolk collaborated last year to oppose land based cables being laid underground to substations supporting offshore wind generation. This group felt that the cables could be laid offshore. This is obviously well before the National Grid Pylons proposal, however, it has been suggested that the group may have expanded their remit to include the National Grid Pylon project. The group are offering to draft a letter on behalf of the parish councils who wish to be included in their campaign. Whilst there was some reservation about a relatively unknown group speaking on behalf of the parish council, it was confirmed that any draft letter would be issued for approval before it was sent. Councillors agreed to wait for further information and will consider any proposal at a future meeting.
15. **To consider a request for funding towards the grass cutting at the Churchyards** – This request was discussed and Councillors agreed to donate £600.
16. **To hear information following up from the Highways Engineer visit and further consider the Parish Partnership scheme** – The Chairman, together with Councillors Welsby, Coleman and Bezkorowajny, met with our Highways Engineer to consider several issues within the village. Initially, the proposal regarding the installation of village gates was considered on the B1113 on the approach to the Jolly Farmers. Due to the positioning of hedges and ditches the gates would need to be installed at a slightly different point to the positioning of the current ‘30mph’ signs. The suggested wording on the gates would be either ‘please drive carefully’ or ‘slow down’, something generic to highlight the fact that a village and residential area is being approached. The cost of two gates is approximately £4000 (plus NCC installation costs) but, should an application be successfully made as part of the parish partnership scheme, the parish council would only be required to meet 50% of the cost. Councillor Welsby asked if the parish council could submit a joint bid with Tacolneston, given that the approach leads very quickly from Forncett into Tacolneston. Councillors supported this idea, with the Chairman saying that the only prohibitive aspect of this may be the timescales involved. The Chairman agreed to approach Tacolneston Parish Council. Councillors agreed to request final costings for the village gates and agreed that the

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preferred wording would be 'Slow Down'.

Councillors also looked at the junction from Common Road on to the B1113 / Long Stratton Road, with regard to the visibility. It has been established that the hedge is the property of the residents of the new properties at Austhorpe House and that each resident is responsible for their section of hedging in the proximity of their property. Should the hedging become overgrown in the future and impact on visibility at the junction, Highways will write to owners requesting that their hedging is cut back accordingly.

Informal lay-bys at some points were also considered but the Highways Engineer advised that, unless the lay-by is already a formal 'passing place' then the land will probably not belong to Highways, it is likely to have simply developed over time with traffic pulling in. It would therefore not be an option to considered formalising these areas with the application of tarmac or other hard surfaces.

Finally, the group looked at the area around Hunts Mead with the view to add another placement for the SAM2. The Highways Engineer was very thorough and looked at every alternative, taking into account the room available on the verge, the safety of the team moving the SAM2 and the appropriate approach siting for vehicles and the conclusion was that there is no suitable site for the SAM2 at that location.

- 17. To hear follow up information from the Highways Rangers visits** – The clerk submitted four reports of issues to be considered by the Highways Rangers. All the responses indicated that Highways would refer all cases to the relevant landowners.
- 18. To receive the financial report and consider the approval of the following payments:**

The financial report was circulated prior to the meeting. The report and the following payments were approved:

Ch. No.	Amount	Payee	Notes
SO	£297.61 (pm)	A Rayner	Aug, Sep & Oct salary
DD	£ 55.77 (pm)	A J Bell	Aug, Sep & Oct pension cont.
BACS	£222.60	A Rayner	Q2 tax payment to HMRC
BACS	£600.00	Upper Tas Valley PCC	Churchyard grass cutting donation
BACS	£229.94	A Rayner	Mar – Oct 22 expenses

- 19. To consider correspondence: None to report**
- 20. Items for information and comment** – Councillor Humphreys reported a broken signpost at the Aslacton Rd / Wash Lane junction. He also noted that the Environment Agency have recently been surveying parts of the River Tas and Councillor Welsby confirmed they had written to several properties along Aslacton Road asking for access to their gardens. It seemed they were considering height and location of properties in the area but, again, they

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seemed to assume the flooding took place from the rear of the properties, not the front. Councillor Welsby reiterated this point. Councillor Humphreys also reported that the Ramblers may have funding available for a kissing gate, if there was an appropriate site on one of the footpaths in Forncett. There was some discussion as to where this could be sited but, in theory, Councillors would be open to accepting a kissing gate for locating at a suitable point in the parish.

A member of the public mentioned the junction at Common Road, specifically at night-time, whereby one of the lights at ground level aimed at illuminating the pub, does look as though it could be on the road, potentially causing confusion to motorists and other road users. The Chairman said he will check this next time he is in the area.

Finally, there have been reports of two vans driving in to yards and farms locally, seemingly having a look around and then leaving. This could be nothing sinister but residents are asked to remain vigilant and report anything suspicious to the police.

**21. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 17 November 2022.**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 8.50pm.