

Forncett Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
held at Forncett Village Hall on Thursday 16 November 2023 at 7.30pm

In Attendance: Cllr B Frith (Chairman) Cllr B Humphreys, Cllr G Barnes, Cllr D Welsby, Cllr D Bezkorowajny, Cllr M Sanders

Parish Clerk Anne Rayner
6 members of the public

1. **To consider apologies for absence** – Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Allen. County Councillor Catherine Rowett also sent her apologies.
 2. **To receive any declarations of interest** – None to report
 3. **To approve the minutes of the last meeting (19th October 2023)** – The minutes were approved without alteration and signed as correct by the Chairman.
 4. **To consider matters arising from the minutes (for information only)** – Nothing to report.
 5. **Open forum, to hear from members of the public including, if available, a report from District Councillor Kim Carsok and County Councillor Catherine Rowett** – County Councillor Rowett sent a report, which included details of the following:
 - How to report flooding information
 - Norfolk County Council budget consultation
 - Food waste prevention
 - Warm and well winter campaign
- Some members of the public present raised concerns regarding a new nursery / child minding business at a property on Long Stratton Road, mainly with regard to highways concerns. The clerk will seek advice on this matter.
6. **To consider planning applications: None to report**
 7. **To hear of planning decisions and information: None to report**
 8. **Parish Partnership Scheme 2024 / 25** – A quote has been received in respect of potential works to improve FP4 in the village. Because of some uncertainty as to how involved the works may become, Highways have provided an estimate but also suggested that the parish council needs to allow for an additional amount, as a contingency. The quote was discussed at some length but Councillors felt both amounts seemed to be considerable higher than expected. It was agreed to respond to Highways, asking if there is a possibility of an alternative scheme working but also asking what would happen if the path deteriorated further and became unsafe. The parish council understands that Norfolk County Council has responsibility for footpath maintenance and therefore it is assumed the path would not be closed. The clerk will also contact the Parish Partnership team and say that a bid is still possibly pending, depending on a further quotation.

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9. **Ongoing Highways issues – including flooding** – Operatives from the Environment Agency (EA) have been carrying out works in the village at the River Tas. Whilst this is very welcome, Councillor Welsby reported that they are leaving the branches and foliage they are cutting back on the side of the banks. Councillor Welsby has pointed this out and suggested that, when river levels rise again, the debris will be swept back in to the river potentially adding to the problem again. Operatives from the EA seemed to think it was unlikely levels would rise that much, Councillor Welsby therefore assured them they certainly could and asked if an alternative solution could be found for disposal of the debris. Blocked drains on Aslacton Road have also been reported again. Highways seem reluctant to act on these, which is frustrating, given their proximity to the flooding issue, so the information was submitted again via Councillor Rowett.

Several other Highways related issues in the village, such as broken road signs and overgrown hedges have been dealt with. Unfortunately, ongoing issues related to parking around the school continue and are causing considerable distress to affected residents. The parish council is in touch with both South Norfolk Council and the Long Stratton Police team in an attempt to ease the situation.

10. **Village hall grant expenditure** – The village hall committee currently have £543.97 of their annual £1500 grant still carried forward from the 22/23 year, meaning they are owed £2043.97 in total. The village hall committee would like to purchase a larger smart TV for the village hall, expanding what they can offer in the hall. An estimate of the cost of this is £1600 (including wall mount, fitting and VAT). A formal request was received from the village hall committee for the parish council to purchase this on their behalf and donate it to the village hall. The parish council approved this request. The balance of the annual budget will be paid to the village hall, when the final figures are known.
11. **To hear recommendations relating to the 24 / 25 budget and agree the precept for the forthcoming year** – The Chairman, together with Councillors Humphreys and Barnes and the clerk, met earlier in the week to discuss the budget for the 24 / 25 year and present a precept recommendation. A budget summary was shared with all Councillors in advance of the meeting. Despite increased costs, Councillors agreed that the parish council did still have reasonable healthy reserves and, given the current financial pressures on households, were reluctant to increase the precept unless absolutely necessary. Councillors therefore resolved to hold the precept at £12000 for the forthcoming year.
12. **To receive the financial report and consider the approval of the following payments:**

Payment method	Amount	Payee	Notes
SO	£ 326.05	A Rayner	November salary
DD	£ 61.12	A J Bell	November pension
BACS	£ 800.00	Forncett Flyer	2 nd grant instalment

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All payments and the financial report were approved.

13. To consider correspondence:

- a) April 2023 pay award** – NALC have confirmed settlement of the 2023 pay award. Councillors approved the award for the clerk and this will be implemented, with arrears, in the December pay.

14. Items for information and comment – A member of the public reported a drain on Low Road which was filled in some time ago. This has been reported to Highways previously but no action has been taken. The exact location will be established and then reported again.

15. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 19th December 2023 – A reminder that the December meeting will be on the **Tuesday**, rather than the usual Thursday.

The parish council meeting was closed at 8.25pm.