

Forncett Parish Council  
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council  
held at Forncett Village Hall on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 7.30pm

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

Parish Clerk Anne Rayner  
County Councillor Catherine Rowett  
4 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 (16<sup>th</sup> November 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 provided a full report, which included:
  - Advice from Highways and Norfolk County Council, relating to both highways and general advice around staying safe and warm throughout Winter
  - NCC Devolution Plans
  - Road safety schemes
  - Bus travel statistics – Good news within the County, passenger numbers have exceeded pre-pandemic levels in Norfolk
6. **To consider planning applications: None to report**
7. **To report planning comments agreed via email between meetings:**
  - a) **2023 / 0022 – Merrie Robertson Memorial Cottage, Low Rd – Two storey front extension and single storey rear extension – No objections**
8. **To hear of planning decisions and information:**
  - a) **2023 / 2844 Forncett Primary School – single storey extension incorporating offices – Approved**

Councillor Rowett needed to leave the meeting promptly and it was therefore agreed to deal with item 12 on the agenda whilst she was present.

**12. Ongoing Highways issues – including grit bins, school parking, Low Rd / Station Rd junction**

- **Grit bins** – As far as the parish council (and local residents) are aware, the two grit bins in Forncett have not been filled this year, nor last year. This has been reported to Highways on several occasions. The issue has been raised again as, during a recent cold spell, there were unfortunately a few incidents involving vehicles at the Moulton Bridge junction. The clerk will raise this again and Councillor Rowett confirmed she would support them being refilled.
- **School Parking** – This continues to be a contentious issue, causing some distress to residents along Aslacton Road. South Norfolk Council Civil enforcement and Norfolk Constabulary have both said they will visit when time and resources allow. Road markings such as an H bar (if approved) are funded by residents and double yellow lines need a Traffic Order. Residents who feel cars are parking illegally (eg over dropped kerbs) are encouraged to note all details as appropriate.
- **Low Rd / Station Rd junction** – Highways engineers have proposed a scheme to improve safety at this junction, which includes signs, chevrons and replacement road markings. Highways have asked how this will be funded but the parish council feel that, as there is evidence of accidents at this site, this should primarily be a Highways funded scheme. The clerk will go back to Highways and ask further questions regarding the funding.
- **Road closures / Gigaclear installation** – The Chairman reported on the chaos caused by the recent road closure information sent out from Norfolk County Council relating to these works, which, unfortunately, did not correlate at all with the roads that were actually closed. Neither Norfolk County Council, nor Gigaclear, responded satisfactorily to complaints about the mis-information sent out. Not only were the wrong roads closed but the signage put in place, particularly at the Long Stratton Rd / Common Rd crossroads was extremely dangerous, taking up one entire lane and forcing anyone turning off from the B1113 into the path of oncoming traffic.

Councillor Rowett reported that she may possibly be able to contribute to the highways improvements proposed for the Station Rd / Low Rd junction but that she was also mindful of the signage needed at Brock's Water.

Councillor Bezkorowajny reported that the verges throughout the Forncett's are being destroyed by vehicles. Drivers seem to have very little patience with approaching vehicles and mount the verges which, given the wet weather, are being eroded at a worrying rate.

Councillor Humphreys reported that the side of the road at Wash Lane is virtually falling away, the poor weather being a contributory factor, but also vehicles using one side of the verge to pass a large number of parked vehicles on the opposite side. Also, the valve in the ditch on Aslacton Road is simply not doing its intended job, water is running out of the ditch and contributing to the excess water running down the road.

Finally, within the last couple of months or so, something seems to have happened along Low Road, meaning that water is not draining away. Although the filled in drain could be contributing to this, there appears to have been a more recent change. It was agreed to wait for the weather to dry up a bit before attempting to locate the source.

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9. **To hear an update re FENS** – The Chairman reported that Julia Fromings-Hill is currently reviewing and updating the directory of people offering to help and also those who have indicated they may need assistance, in the event of an emergency. This includes the procedure for how people will access the information needed, whilst complying with GDPR regulations.
10. **To hear a report – electricity system Operator meeting** – The Chairman attended a meeting at County Hall to hear information about the process of exploring all feasible options relating to the National Grid pylons proposal. There was little new information to report but the Chairman did voice his surprise at how few people were in attendance. He was the only representative from a parish council.
11. **Parish Partnership Scheme 2024 / 25** – The suggested improvements to FP4 have been turned down by the highways engineer. However, the parish council have been told that they could potentially engage their own contractor (with the appropriate insurances in place to allow for work on a public highway / footpath). The PC has also been told that the current parish partnership scheme is already oversubscribed. Taking everything into account, Councillors agreed not to pursue a parish partnership bid this year. The question of what will happen to the footpath, should it deteriorate further and become unsafe, remains outstanding.
13. **Station Rd land – report for information** – The Chairman and Councillor Humphreys recently visited the site to look at the trees bordering the neighbouring bungalow. Councillor Humphreys agreed to ask a contact to advise what work may be needed.
14. **To consider the appointment of an internal auditor for the current financial year and to receive a quote for the fee** – A quote of £120 has been received from Sonya Blythe. Sonya completed the internal audit for the parish council last year and, although the fee has increased, Councillors felt this still represented good value and were happy to accept the quote. The clerk will send an appointment letter to Sonya.
15. **To receive the financial report and consider the approval of the following payments:**

Payment method	Amount	Payee	Notes
SO	£ 513.34	A Rayner	December salary (inc arrears)
DD	£ 96.22	A J Bell	December pension
BACS	£ 291.17	HMRC	Clerk tax Q3
BACS	£ 586.47	Village hall	Balance of grant payment
BACS	£ 36.00	NALC	Councillor training
BACS	£ 52.91	S Leavesley	E-noticeboard

All payments and the financial report were unanimously approved.

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- 16. To consider correspondence:**  
**a) South Norfolk Village Clusters Housing Allocation Plan** – For information only. The nearest sites are in Tacolneston.
- 17. Items for information and comment** – The village hall committee passed on their thanks to the parish council for purchasing the new television and donating it to the village hall.
- 18. To confirm the date of the next meeting as Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024.**

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