

FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING

**held in Forton Parish Rooms at 7:10 p.m.
on Wednesday 08 May 2024**

PRESENT:

Councillors: S Spencer (Chair), D Carver (RFO), P Hammond (V Chair), A Hawkins, O Thomas

Clerk: Carol Little

1 Apologies for Absence:

Cllr Z Young had submitted apologies to the Clerk which were accepted.

County Councillor Mark Winnington and Borough Councillor Scott Spencer did not attend.

2 Declaration of Councillors' Personal Interests:

None

3 a) Minutes of Meeting 13 March 2024:

Minutes were accepted and signed by the chairman without amendment.

b) Matters Arising not on this Agenda:

Cllr Carver confirmed he had attended an online meeting about data protection and the allocation of [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) email addresses for councillors. He advised that whilst this was clearly where we needed to be there would be a financial implication. The clerk advised that she had circulated an email earlier in the day regarding the requirement to have a data protection officer. It was felt that more information was needed and quotations obtained to consider these issues further.

The clerk agreed to take this forward. Action Clerk

4 Parish Council Vacancy:

The clerk confirmed that despite reposting the vacancy on the parish council noticeboards and including a flier with the church newsletter, there had been no expressions of interest. The chairman thanked Cllr Hammond for his assistance with this.

5 Financial Report; Authority for Payments, Risk Assessment & Audit:

1 31 March 2024 Year-End Financial Statement

The financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2024 had been circulated. It balanced to the bank statements covering the year-end with a closing balance of £924.82. It is this statement that provides the information for the annual return, page 6 which is attached to this report and which will require the council's approval. (See paragraph 5 below).

The 2023/2024 Year End financial statement was accepted as a true record and the chairman signed a copy.

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2 2024/2025 Quarter One

The financial statement for Quarter 1 dated 29 April 2024 had been circulated. It balanced to the latest bank statements received with a closing balance of £1,711.25 the first tranche of £786.43, Precept, Council Tax Grant and Concurrent monies having been received from Stafford Borough Council on 04 April.

The 2024/2025 Quarter 1 financial statement was accepted as a true record and the chairman signed a copy.

3 Insured Risks

The Council undertook its risk assessment based on a review of the proposed schedule of insurance from Zurich which had been circulated. Councillors satisfied themselves that renewal, on the same terms as last year, will meet the risks the Council might face during the forthcoming year. (Cover runs from 01 June to 31 May).

It was agreed to continue insurance with Zurich on the terms offered from 01 June 2024 to 31 May 2025 at the premium of £196.00 (budget £201.88).

4 Payments Approved

Precept Payments	£.p	Budget £.p	Agreed to Pay £.p
Clerk's Salary (gross) – 1 st quarter	126.61	126.61	101.41
PAYE	25.20	nil	25.20
Clerk's expenses	tba	15.00	nil
SPCA subscription 2024/25	108.00	106.05	108.00
Zurich Insurance premium 2023/24	196.00	201.88	196.00
		TOTAL	430.61

The above payments were approved and the RFO authorised to make them.

5 Annual Audit 2023/2024

The audit papers need to be submitted before 30 June this year. The necessary notices for the exercise of electors' right to inspect accounts and records will be posted with the period allowing examination from 10 June 2024 to 19 July 2024 (30 working days).

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The council proceeded to complete the following actions: -

- 5 1 **Approve the Certificate of Exemption (Page 3 of the AGAR) already signed by the RFO. The Chairman then counter-signed (leaving the minute reference blank).**
- 5 2 **Note the receipt of the Internal Audit Report (Page 4 of the AGAR).**
- 5 3 **Address the Governance Questions Nos 1 – 8 (Page 5 of the AGAR). The Chairman & Clerk each signed (leaving the minute reference blank).**
- 5 4 **Approve the Accounting Statements 2023/24 (Page 6 of the AGAR) already signed by the RFO. The Chairman then counter-signed (leaving the minute reference blank).**
- 5 5 **Record a vote of thanks to Neil Pragg for conducting our internal audit, without charge.**

The RFO will now complete and return the audit papers. Action RFO

6 **A519 Update**

It was noted that the patching work between Forton and Sutton had recently been completed and the clerk advised she had circulated a further road closure commencing on 30th May 2024.

The clerk confirmed that she and Cllr Young had walked the A519 to determine the possible locations for any safety signage, welcome gates or planters. The clerk had subsequently made contact with Mark Keeling in the Highways department. He has indicated he would be keen to support any parish council initiative.

The clerk agreed to take this forward. Action Clerk

7 **Matters requiring attention in the Parish**

Cllr Carver raised Meretown residents' concerns about the high speeds that some motorists are travelling along Meretown lane between the A518 and A519. Other councillors confirmed they had also observed traffic travelling far too fast. Cllr Carver asked that we should investigate an extension of the 30mph speed limit in Forton or even if it might be possible to get the whole designated a Quiet Lane.

The clerk agreed to take this forward. Action Clerk

8 **Correspondence**

Already dealt with in matters arising.

9 **Any other business**

None.

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- 10** **Date of next meeting**
Wednesday 3 July 2024
- 11** Meeting Closed at 7:50 p.m.