

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 29th JUNE 2021 AT 7.30PM IN THE GARDEN ROOM AT THE COMMUNITY CENTRE

PRESENT: Cllrs. Josephson (Chairman), Davies, Hill, R Lewin, T Lewin, McNally, Moore, Pritchitt, Spackman, Summers, Waters & Withers

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Miller, Williams & Wogan

NOT PRESENT:

IN ATTENDANCE: The Clerk & Asst. Clerk. County & District Cllr. Galley, District Cllr. Patterson-Vanegas & County Cllr. Taylor

C57/21 PUBLIC QUESTIONS:

None

C58/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr. Miller (Family), Cllr. Williams (work) and Cllr. Wogan (ill health).

C59/21 RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Annual meeting of Council held on 11th May 2021 were proposed for acceptance by Cllr. Josephson, seconded by Cllr. McNally and were signed as a true record. There were no objections to the deletion of the digital transcript of that meeting.

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 18th May were proposed for acceptance by Cllr. Josephson (with 1 amendment), seconded by Cllr. Waters and were signed as a true record. There were no objections to the deletion of the digital transcript of that meeting.

C60/21 CLARIFICATION OF ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING

None

C61/21 TO NOTE & APPROVE LIST OF DELEGATED DECISIONS.

This had previously circulated and was NOTED

TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW

Name	Min. No.	Category of Interest	Reason
None			

C62/21 CHAIRMANS COMMENTS

The Chairman informed Council that she was bringing up a matter under Standing Order 3(x) – urgent business.

She asked Council to consider that the office should be closed during August to give staff a ‘Covid’ break. Obviously, there were some key issues that needed to be addressed, but this would be paid leave – not part of the staffs’ Annual leave. This would be a practical way of thanking the staff for their continued work through the pandemic.

Cllr. Pritchitt objected that this matter was not on the agenda – the Clerk read out the relevant Standing Order that confirmed that this was allowed.

Cllr. Josephson proposed that the office should be closed during August and it should be left to the staff to make sure any essential matters are dealt with and how this is done.

Cllr. Hill asked for a recorded vote on this matter.

The proposal was seconded by Cllr. McNally and a vote was taken:

For: Cllrs. Davies, Hill, Josephson Lewin, T Lewin, McNally, Spackman, Waters & Withers
AGREED

Abstained: Cllrs. Summers & Pritchitt

The Chairman also commented on the vexatious, unnecessary questioning of staff decisions. This gives the impression of mistrust. The Council should allow the staff to carry out their duties without undermining them. She reminded Council that they had a good team of staff and they were in danger of losing some of them if this situation continues. She advised that she would call a meeting of Committee chairmen to endeavour to make meetings more productive.

C63/21 SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

This had been previously circulated and was NOTED.

C64/21 TO NOTE CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION

1. Government Kickstart scheme – 2 CV's had been received and interview dates were being arranged.
2. Skatepark Extension
3. Pending Leases
4. Waste Recycling Project

The report on the above matters formed part of the backing papers previously circulated and was NOTED

C65/21 SUMMARY FINANCIAL REPORT

This had been previously circulated and was NOTED.

C66/21 REPORTS FROM PRINCIPAL COUNCILS

County Cllr. Taylor – A report had been circulated and was NOTED.

She advised that the kissing gates on the land behind Hartfield Road were to be changed to larger accessible gates. The Rights of Way team were looking at the footpaths in the area. Any necessary re-surfacing of footpaths would probably not be done until the next financial year.

District Cllr. Patterson-Vanegas – reported that the Local Plan was in the making and Parish Councils can have their say this year. The District Council wants to engage with Parish Councils at the Parish cluster meetings. She was liaising with County Cllr. Taylor, Cllr. Josephson and Mel Mesher (Parish Councils youth leader) with regards to the drugs issue in the village.

County & District Cllr. Galley – he advised that the finances of the County Council were very healthy at the moment. He advised that he was now Vice Chair of the County Council. He encouraged the Parish to get involved with the Parish Cluster meetings. He also advised that the possibility of food waste being collected separately was being looked into.

C67/21 REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES

Amenities & Services; a report previously circulated and NOTED

Property & Assets: a brief report was presented to Members and was NOTED

Community Services: a report had been previously circulated and was NOTED

Finance & Policy: Cllr. R Lewin noted that there was a meeting at the end of July

Planning: Nothing to report.

C68/21 REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr. T Lewin reported that the Conservators hoped to restart the Parish Liaison meetings later in the year.

C69/21 REPORT FROM COMMUNITY WARDEN

The report from the Community Warden had been previously circulated and was NOTED.

C70/21 TO CONSTITUTE AND CONFIRM TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A WORKING GROUP TO EXAMINE THE COUNCIL'S COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Three of the Council committees had nominated a representative for this group:

Amenities & Services – Cllr. Wogan

Community Services – Cllr. Davies

Property & Assets – Cllr. Williams

Cllr. Josephson proposed that Cllr. R Lewin be the representative for Finance & Policy. This was seconded by Cllr. T Lewin and AGREED.

Cllr. Josephson proposed that Cllr. McNally be the representative for Planning. This was seconded by Cllr. R Lewin and AGREED.

Cllr. Moore joined the meeting at 8.30pm.

Cllr. Josephson proposed that the Council accept Cllr. R Lewin's working group proposal (as below) as the Terms of Reference for the Working Group. This was seconded by Cllr. Hill and AGREED.

WORKING GROUP PROPOSAL

- To establish a Working Group to review the current Committee structure, without limitation, to meet over the next 9 months or so (and report to a Full Council prior to the next AGM).
- Such Working Group to include at least one representative from each current Committee plus, due to the possible implications for staff involvement and costs, the Clerk as a member, not facilitator, and therefore a Group secretary.
- The remit of the Group shall be to consider:
 - The terms of reference of each current Committee.
 - Whether the number of Committees can reasonably be reduced and, if so, how.
 - Whether a different structure can allow more time for discussion on key issues.
 - How Committees are made up (including obligation on Chair and Vice Chair to attend all), the benefit of co-opted members and voting structure for F&P).
 - To develop a menu of options for Full Council to consider in due course, including a balanced analysis of the implications of each option – NOT to put forward a recommendation.
 - Such options to include staying as we are.
 - Once the range of options have been agreed by the Group, consult with all Councillors prior to any submission to Full Council.
 - Such submission to fairly reflect comments received (confidential if requested) in the final paper to Full Council.

C71/21 TO CONSIDER A PROPOSAL TO PROVIDE A 'COUNCIL INFORMATION POINT' AT THE WEEKLY FARMERS' MARKET

This was discussed. Cllr. Josephson proposed that the Council provide an information point each month at the Farmers' market manned by 1 or 2 representatives of the Council as a trial period for 4 months. This was seconded by Cllr. T Lewin and AGREED with 1 abstention.

C72/21 TO CONSIDER A REQUEST FROM THE FOREST ROW RADIO FOR USE OF COUNCIL PREMISES

There was much discussion on this matter.

Cllr. R Lewin proposed that the Council decline this request. This was seconded by Cllr. Moore and AGREED with 2 against.

C73/21 NOTICES, CONSULTATIONS & CORRESPONDENCE

None.

C74/21 ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE

Cllr. Pritchitt asked that the storeroom upstairs become a comfort area for staff.

Cllr. Moore asked that the matter of overgrown rural roads be discussed. The County Council needed to be reminded to ask landowners to cut back vegetation to improve visibility.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

SIGNED:

DATE.....(Chairman)