

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF FOREST ROW PARISH COUNCIL HELD ON 28<sup>th</sup> JULY 2020 AT 7.30PM VIA ZOOM**

**PRESENT:** Cllrs. Josephson (Chairman), Davies, Hill, T Lewin, McNally, Miller, Moore, Pritchitt, Summers, Williams & Wogan

**APOLOGIES:**

**NOT PRESENT:** Cllr. Withers

**IN ATTENDANCE:** The Clerk, Asst. Clerk, District Cllr. Patterson-Vanegas. Julia Jason, Sally Beare, Georgia Taylor, Stephen King and Kate Taylor-Smith

**C39/20 PUBLIC QUESTIONS:** Julia Jason spoke in support of Earth Protectors. Sally Beare spoke against the installation of 5G. She wanted to help the Councillors become more informed and be in a better position to make any decisions. Stephen King spoke on behalf of FRocal (a visioning group) which was hoping to help the local community feed itself from local farms etc. It wanted to explore issues in the local community. Cllr. Hill spoke as a Trustee of the Village Hall – she was disappointed that the Village Hall had not yet been consulted regarding the plans for regeneration of the village businesses and the planned proposal for road closure of Hillside. She reiterated that the area marked as no. 10 on the previously circulated map, did not belong to the Parish Council, but to the Village Hall and was for their users and emergency vehicles only.

Cllr. Josephson proposed that item 16 on the agenda be discussed at this stage of the meeting. This was seconded by Cllr. T Lewin and AGREED.

**C40/20 TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE ON SUPPORT FOR FOREST ROW BUSINESS RE-OPENING PROPOSAL**

Cllrs. McNally, Summers and Wogan together with the Clerk had met and produced a paper detailing the conditions for businesses using Council-owned green land – this had been previously circulated.

Cllr. R Lewin proposed that Standing Orders be suspended to allow District Cllr. Patterson-Vanegas to speak on this matter. This was seconded by Cllr. Josephson and AGREED.

District. Cllr Patterson-Vanegas spoke about her ideas for helping the businesses of the village get back on their feet following the pandemic and subsequent lockdown.

Cllr. T Lewin proposed that the Council accept the document drawn up by Cllrs. McNally, Summers and Wogan and the Clerk with the exclusion of point 2 (and also adding the triangular green in Lower Road to the list of excluded areas). This was seconded by Cllr. Davies and AGREED.

Standing Orders were reinstated.

Cllr. Moore apologised for having to leave the meeting early and left at 8.25pm.

**C41/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** No apologies had been received.

**C42/20 RECORDS OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were proposed for acceptance by Cllr. McNally, seconded by Cllr. T Lewin and would be signed as a true record.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2020 were proposed for acceptance by Cllr. T Lewin, Seconded by Cllr. Wogan and would be signed as a true record.

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 were proposed for acceptance by Cllr. McNally, seconded by Cllr. T Lewin and would be signed as a true record.

No objections were noted to deletion of the digital transcript of the any of the above meetings.

**C43/20 CLARIFICATION OF ACTIONS FROM LAST MEETING**

None

#### **C44/20 TO NOTE & APPROVE LIST OF DELEGATED DECISIONS**

There were no delegated decisions to be approved in this period.

#### **C45/20 TO DECLARE ANY INTERESTS OR REQUEST DISPENSATION PERTAINING TO THE ITEMS BELOW**

(The Clerk indicated that the minimal mention of the Sports Ground lease did not merit a declaration)

<b>Name</b>	<b>Min. No.</b>	<b>Category of Interest</b>	<b>Reason</b>
Cllr. Hill	C40/20	Personal	Trustee of the Village Hall Management Committee
Cllr. Josephson	C40/20	Personal	Business owner in the village
Cllr. Williams	C40/20	Personal	Hospitality worker in the village

#### **C46/20 CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS**

The Chairman advised that the Business Forum would be re-formed. There was discussion regarding this. Cllr. Josephson proposed that the steering committee for the business group should be revived to coordinate business regeneration out of the Covid crisis, with a view to handing the administration back to the businesses after an initial period. This was seconded by Cllr. McNally and AGREED.

#### **C47/20 TO NOTE CLERK'S REPORT ON MATTERS NOT REQUIRING A DECISION**

- External Audit & public inspection. Council signed off the Governance Statement & Annual Financial Return at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> June and the papers were submitted for external audit on 29<sup>th</sup> June. There has been one public request for sight of the accounts. NOTED
- Outdoor Works Outdoor works have continued as usual, both in Forest Row and under the contract with Maresfield. After protracted discussion on the insurance implications, the Rush Green play area (which had been in constant use despite being locked up) was formally opened on 20<sup>th</sup> July. NOTED
- Re-opening the Community Centre/VENUe – The law (as distinct from the guidance) now permits public buildings to be re-opened subject to certain safeguards. We have initiated the process by sending a questionnaire to all regular hirers as to their intentions and readiness to resume their activities. NOTED
- The Community Consultation. The formal consultation of the electorate about Public Works borrowing for capital projects was dispatched by AiRS to all households in the week commencing 13<sup>th</sup> July and will run until 31<sup>st</sup> July (although late responses will be added in if possible). AiRS hopes to report the results in the first week of August. NOTED
- Current financial situation. We have clearly taken a 'hit' on operational income during the pandemic, with the closure of hiring spaces, and rent concessions to tenants. We have received some extra income in grants, and postponed staff salary increases, but have also incurred some extra expenses, such as the helpline. The Finance Committee resolved on 7<sup>th</sup> July that Chairs & Vice-Chairs would meet to review the overall position, followed by a meeting of all Councillors. These will be set up after the July accounts are complete. NOTED
- The old Venu building. The final details of a longer-term lease remain to be settled, but in the interim, the proposed tenant has asked for access on a hiring basis, so that activities can commence on a limited basis. A licence agreement to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> August has been drawn up and accepted. NOTED

#### **C48/20 REPORTS RECEIVED FROM PRINCIPAL COUNCILS**

None

#### **C49/20 TO NOTE REPORTS FROM STANDING COMMITTEES**

- Community Services Committee – Cllr T Lewin reported that the Car Club had now suspended their activities until further notice and the cars had been returned. Cllr. Hill thanked the group including the volunteers, for all their hard work over the years on this valuable initiative. This was echoed by the rest of Council. Minutes had been previously circulated and were NOTED

- Amenities & Services Committee – Cllr. Wogan advised that there were some essential tree works to be undertaken. Minutes had been previously circulated and were NOTED
- Planning Committee- No report. Minutes had been previously circulated and were NOTED
- Finance Committee – No report. Minutes had been previously circulated and were NOTED
- Property Committee – No report. Minutes had been previously circulated and were NOTED

#### **C50/20 TO NOTE REPORTS FROM REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

None.

#### **C51/20 TO RATIFY THE INSURANCE OPTION RE FIDELITY GUARANTEE**

The internal auditor recommended last year that we should increase the amount covered by the fidelity guarantee in the insurance schedule (at an additional premium). The Finance Committee chose this option and Council is asked to ratify this option for the records. Cllr. Pritchitt proposed that this be ratified. This was seconded by Cllr. R Lewin and AGREED.

#### **C52/20 TO CONFIRM THE OPTION FOR THE NEW WEBSITE & AUTHORISE ITS IMPLEMENTATION**

This was discussed and Cllr. R Lewin proposed that the quote from Blue Level (recommended by the staff) should be accepted. This was seconded by Cllr. McNally and AGREED.

#### **C53/20 TO RESOLVE RE THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING AND AUTUMN RECEPTION**

This was discussed and Cllr. Josephson proposed that the Autumn Reception be cancelled this year. The winners of the Best Allotment & Citizen of the Year would be notified and made public. This was seconded by Cllr. Hill and AGREED.

There was discussion regarding the Annual Parish Meeting. Cllr. Miller proposed that this could be held via Zoom – there was no seconder for this.

Cllr. Josephson proposed that the Annual Parish Meeting be cancelled this year and the parishioners would be informed as much as was practicable, of what the Council is doing. This was seconded by Cllr. Pritchitt and AGREED with 1 against.

#### **C54/20 TO CONSIDER & RESOLVE ON THE PRINCIPLE AND PROCESS OF CO-OPTION**

There were now 2 vacancies on the Council. No request for by-election had been made. Applications for co-option would be invited.

Cllr. Josephson proposed that the 2 places be advertised as widely as possible, and a extra-ordinary meeting be held in September to interview the candidates in person. This was seconded by Cllr. McNally and AGREED.

#### **C55/20 TO CONSIDER & RESOLVE ON SUPPORT FOR TWO ENVIRONMENTAL CAMPAIGNS**

These initiatives were asked to submit more information for this to be discussed at a later date.

#### **C56/20 TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE ON A PROPOSAL FOR A WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE EVIDENCE ON 5G**

There was vigorous discussion on this matter. Although it was noted that this matter was not in the Parish Councils remit, Cllr. McNally proposed that this subject be revisited after the conclusion of the High Court judicial review currently being launched by '5GemfReview' was settled. This was seconded by Cllr. R Lewin and AGREED with 7 for and 4 against.

#### **C57/20 TO CONSIDER PROPOSAL FOR THE APPLICATION OF A LEGACY**

There were suggestions made and it was decided to carry this subject over to a later meeting.

#### **C58/20 TO CONSIDER AND RESOLVE ON AN URGENT REQUEST FROM FOREST ROW PRE-SCHOOL**

On 7<sup>th</sup> July, the Finance & Policy Committee considered and granted a request from the Pre-School for a rent reprieve for June/July/August 2020 in view of the pressures on its financial situation arising from the pandemic restrictions.

Pre-school have since contacted the Council to explain that their situation has not improved, but has rather deteriorated, and requesting an extension of the reprieve period.

Cllr. Hill proposed 2 months reprieve be given. This was seconded by Cllr. Williams.

Cllr. Pritchitt proposed that 1-month reprieve be given – this proposal was subsequently withdrawn.

Cllr. T Lewin proposed that 3 months reprieve be given. This was seconded by Cllr. Williams and voted on.  
The results were: 4 for and 6 against  
Cllr. Hills proposal was voted on:

NOT RESOLVED.  
AGREED

**C59/20 NOTICES, CONSULTATIONS & CORRESPONDENCE**

None that had not already been circulated in Councillors' Reading

**C60/20 ITEMS FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION BY FULL COUNCIL OR REFERRAL TO COMMITTEE**

None

The meeting closed at 9.40 pm.

SIGNED: .....

DATE.....(Chairman)