

Forncett Parish Council
Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Council
held at Forncett Village Hall on Thursday 21 November 2024 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
County Councillor Catherine Rowett
District Councillor Kim Carsok
5 members of the public

1. **To consider apologies for absence** – Apologies were received and accepted from Councillor Allen.
2. **To receive any declarations of interest** – Councillor Humphreys declared an interest in item 11 on the agenda.
3. **To approve the minutes of the last meeting (17 October 2024)** – The minutes were approved without alteration and signed as correct by the Chairman.
4. **To consider matters arising from the minutes (for information only)** – The Chairman reported that the wheelie bin stickers discussed at the meeting last month have been ordered.
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** – District Councillor Kim Carsok reported that support to recruit parish councillors has been developed by the District Council. The planning enforcement team has been expanded and is now called the planning compliance team. For anyone feeling the effects of the loss of the Winter Fuel Allowance, the Help Hub can support in helping with any applications for Pension Credit. Community Action Fund Grants of between £1,000 and £20,000 are still available. Residents are encouraged to nominate local businesses, including pubs and restaurants, as part of the District Council Business Awards.

County Councillor Catherine Rowett reported that she continues to work on several highways projects across the district. Highways engineers have recently been in Spring Lane. A resident present at the meeting gave a summary of the findings and it appeared that the issue actually related to works carried out by Anglian Water. Councillor Rowett met recently with the officer in charge of the Norfolk County Council energy plan. Whilst recognising the benefits of solar energy, Councillor Rowett is mindful of the number and the size of current proposals for solar farms in the South Norfolk area. The budget for Norfolk County Council is currently open for consultation until 16 December 2024, the three main proposals are: an increase to council tax; reducing street lighting usage and a review of the housing related support services.

6. **To consider planning applications:**
 - a) **2024 / 3255 – Agricultural Building West of Low Road – Proposed change of use and associated buildings works of agricultural building to one dwellinghouse with use of existing access** – This application was discussed at some length, with some of the discussion relating to clarity around the exact regulation that the application was submitted under. Councillors could not unanimously agree and it was therefore decided to submit a neutral comment, on the understanding that it is the duty of the planning officer to rule as to whether the site meets the appropriate regulations.
7. **To hear of planning decisions: None to report**
8. **To report planning comments agreed via e-mail in between meetings: None to report**
9. **To update on outstanding highways issues** – The village gateways on the B1113 have finally been installed. Councillor Rowett continues to work with the Highways officer to get the new signage in the village relating to inappropriate access for HGVs and long vehicles relocated to more suitable sites.
10. **To hear updated information re the EVCP and solar panel grants** – The Chairman reported that both grants for EVCP and solar panels at the village hall have been approved. In the end, both applications were made by the village hall. The solar panels should be installed w/c 16 December and the team leading the EVCP installation have indicated that they are keen to get started as soon as possible.
11. **To discuss the maintenance of the Methodist Church graveyard** – Although the Church itself is no longer in use, the graveyard in the grounds remains open and family members visit graves. The churchyard has recently been tidied up by a group of volunteers but a request has been made for a contribution towards the maintenance. Councillors agreed that, as the parish council gives a grant towards the churchyard maintenance at St Peter's and St Mary's, they would be happy to contribute £150.
12. **To hear information regarding the Norfolk Armed Forces Covenant 2025 Commemoration Fund** – Grants of up to £500 are available towards the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ days next year. The closing date for the application is 9 December. Councillors were not aware, at this stage, of any events planned for next year and agreed not to make an application at this time.
13. **To consider river clearance issues** – Councillor Humphreys has supplied some photographs of recently installed signs to indicate the height of the water in local fords. Unfortunately, the signs have been installed side on, meaning that they are not visible on the approach to a ford crossing and any driver would need to be in the centre of the ford before they could be properly seen. There are also concerns that they will act as a paddle, at times of high river flow. It was generally noted that an extremely large team of workers were present for these installations, yet the work that is actually required relating to the river, has still not happened. It was agreed to contact Highways regarding the ford sign installations.

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- 14. To discuss Winter Pressure Grants** – The clerk reported that it has not been possible so far to get all interested parties together to agree a way forward. The clerk has contacted the one volunteer who has indicated that they may be willing to take a lead on getting the sessions set up. It was agreed that even if one session for January, February and March could be agreed, with a view to carrying on next Autumn / Winter, it would be good to see what demand there is for the sessions.
- 15. To approve the 2024 NALC pay award** – The national pay award, due from April 2024, has been agreed and Councillors approved the increased payment from December, with arrears.
- 16. To receive the financial report and consider the approval of the following payments:**

Method	Amount	Payee	Notes
SO	£ 357.07	A Rayner	Nov salary
DD	£ 66.94	A J Bell	Nov pension contribution
BACS	£ 120.00	K L Humphreys & son	VH manhole cover
BACS	£ 429.00	K Isaaks	Wheelie bin stickers

All payments and the financial report were approved unanimously. The new manhole cover in the village hall was donated to the village hall, following purchase by the parish council. The net amount of this (£100) will be deducted from the village hall grant (balance remaining £1400).

- 17. To consider correspondence:**
- a) From NALC regarding Extraordinary General Meeting** -The Chairman noted that Councillors and residents may have seen reports in the local press regarding the dismissal of the County Officer along with suggestions that the organisation is in 'turmoil'. Communications have been received from NALC reassuring members that there is no cause for concern.
- 18. Items for information and comment**
- 19. To confirm the date of the next meeting as 19 December 2024**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 9.10pm.