

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE
FULFORD PARISH COUNCIL
HELD ON THURSDAY 2nd AUGUST 2018 AT 7.15 P.M.
IN FULFORD VILLAGE HALL**

PRESENT: Councillors Brunt (Chairman), Mrs Baskin, Garside, Holmes, Mrs Jennings, Lovatt, McNaught, Monks, Mycock, Miss Noblett, Taylor, Oxby

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs D Plant (Clerk)

APOLOGIES: Cllrs. Dodson, Flackett and White

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Bus service questionnaires - Two members of the Fulford village community were present to say thank you for issuing the bus service questionnaire. They urged the Parish Councillors to do their best in resurrecting any sort of bus service. They both explained how difficult it was to go shopping or to the bank/post office etc without any public transport.

Complaint from a member of the parish regarding the civic amenity visit – A letter was read out by Chairman Cllr Brunt with regard to the recent civic amenity lorry visit. The letter explained that the lorry had broken down and the replacement was only at the Blythe Bridge site for 20 minutes.

Hilderstone Road speed of traffic – Cllr Miss Noblett had been approached by a member of the parish regarding the excessive speed of the traffic on Hilderstone Road.

67/18 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None

68/18 MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

Bus service questionnaires – The Councillors welcomed the feedback and would now wait until all the responses were received. There is to be a transport meeting on Monday 20 August and the committee would discuss the results at this meeting. The Councillors thought that being able to get members of the Parish to Longton, Stone and perhaps onwards to Hanley and Stafford was another valid idea.

Complaint from a member of the parish regarding the civic amenity visit – The Councillors asked the clerk to contact Stafford Borough Council and inform them of the complaint and state that the Parish Council did not feel that they should pay the costs associated with the visit to Mayfield Drive.

Hilderstone Road speed of traffic – Cllr Taylor stated that he thought that the flashing beacon on the pedestrian crossing was not bright enough. The Councillors asked the Clerk to pursue this with Staffordshire County Council with regards to the standards set down for the illumination of crossings. Cllr Noblett asked when the gateway was to be installed. The Clerk informed the Councillors that she was awaiting contact from Glasdon as to a delivery date and she expected it to be imminent.

69/18 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Thursday 12th July 2018, having been circulated, be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

70/18 COUNTY & BOROUGH COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

Borough Cllr. Dodson was not present and had given his apologies.

Borough Cllr Roycroft addressed the Councillors and explained that it was his understanding that the issues with Veolia and the waste collections had now been addressed.

He went onto explain that the issue with the sewage at Black Lake Farm was not a matter for Stafford Borough Council and that Severn Trent were looking into it.

The new Marks and Spencer food store had now opened in Stone and the progress on the new leisure centre building was ongoing.

Cllr Oxby asked Cllr Roycroft to look into the planning application as he had concerns regarding the green belt implications - *18/28898/FUL – Grounds Man House, Stallington Sports Club, Fulford Lane*

71/18 FINANCE

(a) Accounts for Payment

Cllr Jennings raised concerns that the £80 for MW Gardening Services had not come before full council for approval. Cllr Holmes explained that he had a previously agreed budget and the previous Clerk had stated that it didn't need to come before the Council and could come from the budget. Cllr Oxby agreed with this.

The Clerk had broken down the Town and Country invoice to enable the Councillors to see the expenditure categories. Cllr Taylor asked the Clerk to ascertain what areas were being swept.

RESOLVED:

That authority be given for cheques to be issued in settlement of the invoices shown in the accounts for payment attached as an Appendix to the signed minutes.

72/18 PLANNING

(a) Applications

The following decisions made by the Planning Sub-Committee were reported to the meeting:

- 1) That no objections be raised to the following applications:
18/28933/ HOUS – 15 Blacklake Drive.

2) That objections be raised to the following applications:

18/28922/FUL – Land at the rear of 214 Grindley Lane, Blythe Bridge.

- This application is a garden grabbing situation which contravenes Stafford Borough Councils local plan.
- The space between the properties is inadequate
- There is a lack of privacy and light for the neighbouring properties

18/28898/FUL – Grounds Man House, Stallington Sports Club, Fulford Lane

- The proposal is in green belt
- The last recorded use of the property was a sports pavilion

NB – Councillor Oxby asked Borough Councillor Rycroft to look into this matter (as previously minuted)

73/18 OTHER MATTERS REQUIRING A DECISION BY THE COUNCIL

(a) Items - the notice of which was given to the Clerk

As instructed, the Clerk included the following matters on the agenda for this meeting and the topics were then discussed by members: -

- Allotments
- Parish Council office safety requirements.
- Web Site
- Accounts administration
- Grindley Park watering
- Clerk staffing committee

RESOLVED:

1. Allotments

Cllr Jennings addressed the Councillors and provided the following update on the Allotments:

The legal paperwork had previously been estimated at £400 - £500. Stafford Rural Homes have now estimated the paperwork to be in the region of £1000. Cllr Jennings asked for the Councils permission to proceed with the increased costs.

The Councillors agreed that even with the increased cost the facility needed to go ahead as it benefited a large cross section of the Parish.

Resolved Cllr Monks proposed to accept the increased costs and Cllr Noblett seconded.

2. Parish Council office safety requirements

Cllr Noblett brought to the Councils attention the need for essential items in the Parish Office, First Aid Box, Fire Extinguisher, Accident Book.

Cllr Taylor asked if the Clerk could contact the Fire Brigade for them to do a risk assessment of the office and the Clerk could report back.

3. Web Site

Cllr Holmes explained that the web site may not be compliant with GDPR as the server is hosted outside of the UK. Cllr McNaught agreed to look into this and report back with his findings.

4. Accounts administration.

Cllr Holmes asked the Councillors to consider the purchase of a software package called Scribe. The Clerk has experience of using this software and it would make the administration of the annual return for the external auditors easier. The cost would be in the region of £300 - £350

Cllr Jennings proposed that the Clerk be authorised to purchase the software, Cllr Holmes seconded.

5. Grindley Park plant watering

Cllr Holmes submitted a quotation from MW gardening services of £200 to water the plants on Grindley Park until September.

Cllr Jennings asked if extra money was needed in the budget for the project. The Clerk would provide a budget update so that the Councillors could discuss this at the next meeting.

Cllr Jennings proposed that the Council pay the £200 for the extra watering Cllr Noblett seconded.

6. Clerk Staffing committee

Chairman Cllr Brunt explained that a committee had been set up to liaise with the new Clerk during her settling in period.

As part of this process a number of questions had been raised by Councillors and these questions had been discussed with the Clerk. The questions were as follows: -

1. A complaint had been received from a member of the Village Hall Committee regarding the Clerk opening the door of the Village Hall for a funeral caterer, and that the Clerk had been trespassing in the Village Hall to use the kitchen to make herself a hot drink.

Chairman Councillor Brunt explained that a letter had been received that the Clerk had opened the door of the village hall to a funeral caterer and had then been rude to a member of the Village Hall committee.

He had addressed the issue with the Clerk and she had explained that the member of the committee had in fact been rude to her, a heated discussion had taken place and the Clerk subsequently apologised for letting the caterer in to the village hall. She was also unaware that she was not allowed to make a cup of tea in the village hall kitchen. Chairman Councillor Brunt asked the Councillors permission to purchase a kettle for the Parish Office to enable the Clerk to have a hot drink. It was also agreed that the Clerk use the water from the sinks toilets to fill the kettle and enter the village hall via the main front door to use the toilet.

2. Is Fulford Parish your main concern. Councillors had concerns that because the Clerk also worked for Forsbrook Parish Council and had signed the same standard NALC contract at Forsbrook it would in some way compromise section four of the contract which reads.

Declaration of Other Employment

It is a condition of this Contract of Employment that you inform the Council of any alternative employment you undertake, in order to ensure that no tax or insurance liabilities will accrue to the Council. The Council also reserves the right to require that any other employment that you undertake does not conflict with the role or standards required to be undertaken or met in the public office of the Clerk to the Council.

The Clerk had assured the staffing committee that for the 18 hours she works for Fulford that it was her main concern. The meeting clash with Forsbrook Parish Council which had occurred during her first week working for Fulford was the only clash in meetings until the end of 2018. Unfortunately, she had already set the agenda for Forsbrook before starting work with Fulford.

The dates for the meetings for 2019 had yet to be set so she could not answer for the future. She had also stated that Fulford were aware of her employment with Forsbrook at the time of offering her the job and that in fact one of her references was from the Chairman of Forsbrook Parish Council.

She had sought advice from SPCA and they were perplexed as many Clerks have more than one Parish to work for. The SLCC (which the Clerk is a member of) were also confused about the Councillors concerns as it is common practice for Parish Council Clerks to work for several Parishes. All these Clerks had signed the standard NALC contract without consequence.

She had gone on to explain that if at any point in the future the group meetings i.e. Transport, Highways etc did clash with Forsbrook Parish Council meetings she was happy to be flexible about times etc.

Cllr Taylor explained he felt that the Clerk should not have signed her contract with Fulford when the wording was the same as Forsbrook and that she could not guarantee exclusivity. He went on to say that Fulford must come before anything she does.

Cllr Oxby said that the working groups were not official meeting and the previous Clerk wanted it to be set up that way.

Cllr Jennings stated that all meetings were of equal importance and the Clerk should put Fulford first.

Cllr Baskin stated that she did not think that the changing of the meeting times and dates was good and it was unacceptable.

Cllr Holmes said that most Clerks work for more than one council at a time and it is common practice. The Clerk is contracted for 18 hours only for Fulford.

Cllr Taylor stated that the Clerk could be doing other work on our time.

At this point Cllr Taylor suggested he was going to table a motion with regard to the Clerks employment.

The Clerk left the meeting at this point as she felt that the discussion was becoming contrary to the Code of Conduct adopted by the Parish Councillors.

Items not discussed because of Clerks absence

(b) New planters.

Details had been circulated with the agenda.

65/18 MATTERS FOR REPORT

66/18 ITEM(S) FOR THE NEXT MEETING

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Parish Council is to be convened **at Meir Heath and Rough Close Village Hall at 7:15pm.**

CHAIRMAN