

FORDWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2022.

Present: Councillors Adrian McCarthy (chair), Roger Green, Sue Thompson, Geoff Connolly.
In attendance: Guy Foster (clerk), Alan Marsh (KCC) and one member of the public.

125/22. Apologies

Cllr Lewis had sent apologies as had Louise Harvey-Quirke and Georgina Glover of CCC.

126/22 Minutes of the last meetings

The minutes of the meetings held on November 30th and October 26th were unanimously approved as tabled and signed by the chairman.

127/22 Matters arising

Cllr Green reported that Friends of Fordwich now have a spare bank account that can be used for fund-raising purposes.

128/22. Declarations of interests

- Cllr Green declared his role with Friends of Fordwich and District and also declared his position as a trustee of Fordwich United Charities.

129/22 To receive reports from representatives of KCC and CCC

For KCC, Alan Marsh reported that producing a balanced budget for 2023/24 was proving challenging. One proposal was that members' grants would be abolished. PCSO numbers are likely to be reduced.

Mr Marsh could not see how the proposed "eastern bypass" could be funded by KCC. In discussing the CCC Local Plan, he said that traffic surveys should be paid for by KCC.

He has free tickets for Mother Goose at the Sarah Thorne Theatre in Broadstairs.

The meeting was adjourned for comments and questions from members of the public. No matters were raised.

130/22 To receive a report from the neighbourhood plan steering group

Cllr Thompson had only just returned from an extended period abroad but said that a footpath map and heritage issues were currently being worked on.

131/22 Planning

Applications: CA/22/02366 and 02367 (The Manor House); no objections.
CA/22/02421 (Byway House); no objections.

Canterbury Local Plan: the meeting wished to make it clear that FTC objects to the proposed route of the “eastern bypass”, taking all things into consideration, not least because it would cut Fordwich in two.

It was unanimously agreed to send the instruction letter to James Smith (solicitor) and this was duly signed by the chairman.

Cllr McCarthy will contact CCC to try and arrange a new meeting date following the postponement of the previously arranged meeting. If a date cannot be fixed soon, he will press for an extension to the consultation period.

132/22 To receive the Chairman’s and Councillors’ Reports

Cllr Green said the Friends of Fordwich would happily assist with the response to the Local Plan draft.

Cllr Connolly was concerned that it be made clear that the residents’ group who had recently been meeting at Watergate House to consider the Local Plan draft were not acting under the auspices of FTC.

Cllr Thompson reported that Sustrans were going to apply for planning permission in January and so would be doing no work to the cycle path for the time being.

Cllr McCarthy reported that he had attended the function at Sandwich to sign allegiance as a Cinque Port liberty and pay the customary fee.

He said that the leader of CCC will attend the next FTC meeting.

133/22 To consider Christmas arrangements

The recent Christmas event had been a great success and had raised £1,000 for charity. Cllr Connolly proposed a vote of thanks to Mrs McCarthy for organising this and this was fully supported by the meeting.

The next event will be the carols by the Christmas tree followed by refreshments in the church, on December 16th.

134/22 Finance

The clerk reported that the cash book balance at 30th November was £13,815.97. The bank statement was not yet in but the end-October figures had been reconciled. The clerk reminded the meeting that the balance had been boosted by receipt of the neighbourhood plan grant of £3,538.

The following payments were unanimously approved:

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| 1. Sue Thompson – NP domain name renewal | £15.00 |
| 2. Philip Lewis – Christmas tree | £118.80 |
| 3. Adrian McCarthy – Christmas event expenses | £200.00 |

Precept for 2023/24: the clerk noted that FTC is likely to record a deficit of around £500 this year. With relatively low reserves, this is not sustainable. In addition, 2023/24 is potentially an election year and this would be expensive. After discussion, it was unanimously agreed to set the precept for 2023/24 at £10,260, an increase of just under 15% on the current year. Even so, should an election take place, it will be difficult to avoid a further deficit.

Clerk's salary: it was noted that following the agreement of local authority pay increases, the clerk's hourly rate has increased from £13.48 to £14.48 with effect from April 1st 2022.

135/22 To receive the clerk's report and correspondence

All matters in the clerk's report had been dealt with already.

136/33 Highways and footpaths

No further discussion.

137/22 Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as Wednesday January 9th in the town hall at 7.30 pm.

Guy Foster

Clerk to Fordwich Town Council

December 12th 2022.

Signed as a true record _____ Date: _____

Position _____