

# **FORDWICH TOWN COUNCIL**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2023.**

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

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### **40/23 Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Cllrs Lewis and Connolly and from Louise Harvey-Quirke and Georgina Glover of CCC.

### **41/23 Minutes of the last meetings**

The minutes of the meeting held on February 22<sup>nd</sup> were unanimously approved as tabled and signed by the chairman.

### **42/23 Matters arising**

It was suggested that the plant trough at the bottom of the High Street could be moved to a more suitable location.

Following an email from the Sturry church warden, Cllr Lewis had written to say he was trying to follow up on the works to trees at the churchyard and elsewhere and was awaiting a response.

Cllr Lewis wished to convey his thanks to all those who had helped in the recent town tidy-up.

### **43/23. 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.

### **44/23 To receive reports from representatives of KCC and CCC**

For KCC, Alan Marsh reported that KCC had been awarded £6m from central government to help fix pot-holes.

Cllr McCarthy asked about getting a change to the speed limit on Moat Lane and Stodmarsh Road. Mr Marsh said this would be very difficult. He suggested writing to Simon Jones, the relevant cabinet member at KCC.

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The meeting was adjourned for comments and questions from members of the public. The following matters were raised:

- A speed limit of 30 mph was needed along part of Stodmarsh Rd., to the east of the existing speed limit.
- Fordwich should have a Highways Improvement Plan. Cllr McCarthy explained why this had not been pursued recently; it was a question of the cost of any improvements which KCC would expect to be borne by FTC and which would be unaffordable.
- Pot-holes: Stodmarsh Rd is particularly bad. Everyone should report these on-line to Kent Highways.
- Newsletter: some people appear not to be receiving this. Distribution arrangements will be checked.
- Old Park and Chequers Wood SSSI “common position”: FTC appears not to have put its name to the list of supporters of this? Cllr McCarthy said FTC thought this was a matter for individuals. We will look at it next month.
- Freeman of Fordwich: is there a limit on numbers? FTC is not aware of such a limit. The clerk will try and look back through past minutes but it is likely that any such limit will have been set many years ago.
- Disabled parking: would it be possible to have a disabled parking space, in a central location? This is probably very difficult to achieve but FTC will look into it.

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#### **45/23 Planning**

No specific items were on the agenda. It was noted that more “mobile homes” had recently been delivered to Romany Green Acres. The clerk was asked to write to Planning Enforcement at CCC about this.

#### **46/23 To consider appointing Cllr Philip Lewis as a Freeman of Fordwich.**

After discussion it was resolved to make this appointment in acknowledgement of Cllr Lewis’s many years of unstinting service to the town. The voting was two in favour with Cllr Green abstaining.

#### **47/23 To receive a report on Neighbourhood Plan progress**

Cllr Thompson reported that the team would be meeting tomorrow. They are awaiting news of a replacement for Karen Britten at CCC, following her departure. Unspent grant of £2,505 for 2022/23 will need to be repaid. New grant can be applied for for 2023/24, up to £5,794.

#### **48/23 To consider the celebration of the King's Coronation**

It was agreed to have a town picnic on Sunday May 7<sup>th</sup> on the old King's boat house land. More people to help organise it would be useful and further publicity is needed.

#### **49/23 To consider the purchase of a shed**

As was recorded last month, this would require permission from the church authorities and almost certainly planning permission too, so further consideration was deferred.

#### **50/23 To receive the Chairman's and Councillors' Reports**

Cllr Thompson reported on work on the Walking Trail which will be trialled at the Coronation weekend.

Cllr McCarthy noted the email from CDAA in which they promised to undertake some work on the Drove road surface. He felt that they should do more, especially as their tractor-type vehicles were responsible for much of the damage and the clerk was asked to respond to them in these terms.

Cllr Lewis had written to report:

- Well Lane has become a no go area because of the fear of the dogs that roam at the top. CCC have spoken about doing something about the number of vans, illegal businesses etc. But their words achieve little more than growing frustration.
- The same can be said for the growing fly-tipping in Well Lane, Moat Lane and Stodmarsh Road. Reports have gone in, one or two labels have been stuck on furniture or bags to say that action will be taken, but the amount of waste just grows and with it the vermin.
- The first service held in conjunction with the parish for 20 years or more takes place this coming Sunday at 6.00pm to celebrate Palm Sunday. A glass of wine is on offer at the end!
- The Twinning Association is holding an initial meeting with their French counterparts on May 27<sup>th</sup>, based in Junior Kings.
- We need to ensure action is continued on various projects which have been begun, i.e. taking possession of one sixth of the land in the High Street, presently owned by Tom Wait, but promised to the town; planting the apple trees along the riverside once the cycle path has been completed, with the signboard indicating the first recorded Wassailing here in Fordwich. Agreement has been given for the purchase from Brogdale of old, traditional apple trees; sign boards on the river bank giving instructions for use and safety. These have been agreed and commissioned; footpaths - as well as the recognised footpaths, there are others going through the Old Nursery site - and the one going between Bretts and the river, that are not recognised, but have been walked for over 20 years. Work was begun on this but is incomplete.

## 51/23 Finance

The clerk reported that the cash book and bank balance at 1<sup>st</sup> March was £12,709.36.

The following payments were unanimously approved:

1. Guy Foster – February pay and expenses	£408.49
2. HMRC – PAYE Jan-March	£278.00
3. Friends of Fordwich – NP hall hire	£335.00
4. Loxley Group – printing	£25.00

We have received the £500 grant promised by Alan Marsh from KCC.

The financial outturn for 2022/23 looks like being a surplus of more than £2k. But this is misleading as it includes £2.5k of NP grant which is to be repaid, the grant mentioned above which relates to next year and the VAT reclaim, much of which related to past years. The underlying result looks like being a deficit of around £1,100.

## 52/23 To receive the clerk's report and correspondence

Correspondence with the CDAA has been noted above. The clerk also wrote on the same topic to Mr Wachter, one of the relevant land-owners but received a negative reply.

Rev Craig has confirmed his willingness to lead the civic service on October 15<sup>th</sup>.

## 53/23 Highways and footpaths

Cllr McCarthy said he would increase his reporting of pot-holes.

## 54/22 Date of next meeting

Due to absences, this was confirmed as **Wednesday April 19<sup>th</sup>** which is a change from the scheduled date.

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### Guy Foster

*Clerk to Fordwich Town Council*

March 31<sup>st</sup> 2023.

Signed as a true record \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_