

FORDWICH TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2022.

Present: Councillors Adrian McCarthy (chair), Philip Lewis, Geoff Connolly, Sue Thompson. In attendance: Guy Foster (clerk) and three members of the public.

The meeting commenced with a presentation from Trevor Cox of Kent Fire and Rescue who was responding to concerns about fire hydrant availability following a recent fire in the town. He said that one hydrant had a cover which was hard to open and one had a car parked (legally) over it but his key point was that there was no issue of any significance with hydrants in Fordwich. The hydrants are regularly checked and the water company are responsible for their maintenance. Cllr Lewis asked if it were possible for FTC to be informed when checks had been completed and Mr Cox said he would pass this on to the relevant team.

97/22 Apologies

Cllr Green had sent apologies as had Alan Marsh (KCC), Louise Harvey-Quirke (CCC) and Georgina Glover (CCC).

98/22 Minutes of the previous meeting

It was unanimously resolved to accept the minutes of the July meeting as tabled.

99/22 Matters arising

The Old Rectory garden: CCC planning have replied to our query saying that there is no breach of planning permission here. However it seems they may not be fully aware of the degree of planting carried out (and the installation of a fence) and the clerk was asked to raise this with them.

100/22 Declarations of interests

- Cllr Lewis declared his position as a custodian of Fordwich church

101/22 To receive reports from representatives of CCC and KCC

No CCC or KCC members were present.

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

- Air pollution: monitors have been installed but we have not heard of any results. Cllr McCarthy will raise this with CCC.

- Allotments: it is thought that some may be available and also that some current allotment holders do not use their patches and therefore should be asked to give them up. Cllr McCarthy will follow up with the lady who runs the allotments on behalf of FUC which owns them.
- Local by-laws: apparently there used to be a by-law entitling Freemen of Fordwich the right to buy properties at a discount. Was this still valid? Almost certainly not but the clerk will look into this.

102/22 To receive a report from the neighbourhood plan steering group

A new vice chair is to be appointed as the current holder is away for 6 months. New group members are also needed. Mr Derek Stroud was proposed and his appointment was unanimously approved. A couple of other names were mentioned and they will be sounded out.

The group is currently focusing on the historic and natural environment and transport.

Karen Britton of CCC has suggested that the group do their own “call for sites.”

Various documents are available on a shared Google drive and Cllr Thompson will circulate the link for people to access these.

103/22 Planning

Application CA/22/01800 (37 Fordwich Road): no objections.

104/22 To consider matters relating to the civic service and to Christmas

Civic service: it was unanimously resolved to book the George and Dragon for teas at a cost of £420 (60 teas @ £7). It was also unanimously resolved to approve printing costs of £85 and up to £100 for cakes.

Christmas: it was agreed that it would be preferable to move the tree back to its old position outside the town hall. The clerk was asked to ask the Fordwich Arms if they would like to make a contribution and to allow the lights to be plugged into their premises.

We don't want to have two carol services this year but we need to know what the Friends of Fordwich are planning. Cllr Green to be asked about this. Cllr Lewis has pencilled in December 16th at 6 pm for a service in the church.

105/22 Communication issues

Cllr Thompson felt that the various communication channels needed more coordination. She was happy to do more by the way of web-site updating.

106/22 To consider the purchase of trees to commemorate the platinum jubilee

Cllr Lewis is researching the availability and cost of historic varieties of apple trees. We need to contact the George and Dragon and the Holdstocks to agree a location for their planting.

107/22 To receive the Chairman's and Councillors' Reports

Cllr Connolly asked about the Stodmarsh water quality issue. It is believed that this has improved and that various previously blocked housing developments can now go ahead. He has resigned as a town hall custodian.

Cllr Thompson reported on the recent Sustrans walk. It had been useful to talk to them about cycle paths.

Cllr Lewis reported:

- He had received a recent visit by 30 Ukrainians.
- He had undertaken a town tidy-up
- As all knew, there was an issue with the way the proceeds from the jubilee art auction had been allocated. £500 more should have gone to Ukraine aid. Of this, £450 has been raised. It was unanimously resolved that FTC would make up the £50 shortfall. Cllr Lewis will make this donation and FTC will reimburse him.
- We should get a pontoon or build a proper slipway opposite the George and Dragon. This will need liaison with KCC.
- Curtains have been made for particular places in the town hall but they have not been installed. The clerk was asked to raise this with the chair of FUC. It was also felt a picture of the king should be on display.
- An old boat which belonged to Fordwich River Tours needs to be removed from the river.
- Many thanks to Cllr Connolly for organising the recent minute's silence in memory of the late queen.

Cllr McCarthy thought the town ought to have a map on display giving details of the town's history and showing places of interest. All thought this was a good idea. Some leaflets and walking routes would be a good idea too.

108/22 Finance

The clerk reported that the cash book and bank balance at 1st September was £17,528.04. This has been boosted by the receipt of the neighbourhood plan grant of £3,538.

The following payments were unanimously approved:

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| 1. Guy Foster – September salary and expenses, net | £402.39 |
| 2. HMRC (PAYE July – September) | £258.80 |
| 3. Loxley Group (printing) | £50.00 |
| 4. Colin Larking (wall repairs) | £320.00 |

The cheque drawn for Cllr Green at the last meeting turns out to have been unnecessary; the previous cheques given to him had only been reported as “bounced” by the bank as he had already paid them in. The fact that one can now pay in cheques over the phone means that one retains the cheques and it is therefore possible inadvertently to attempt to pay them in twice. Cllr Green is repaying the amount in question.

109/22 To receive the clerk’s report and correspondence

All items in the clerk’s report had been covered elsewhere in the meeting.

110/22 Highways and footpaths

No further discussion.

111/22 Date of next meeting

This was confirmed as Wednesday October 26th in the town hall at 7.30 pm.

Guy Foster

Clerk to Fordwich Town Council

October 3rd 2022.

Signed as a true record _____ Date: _____

Position _____