



TATWORTH AND FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of Tatworth & Forton Parish Council Held on 11th January 2024 at 7pm Main Hall Tatworth Memorial Hall

Present: Chairman Councillor R Down, Councillors: S Adams, C Brown, P Chapple, C Heal, L Matthey, K Patay, D Peake, E Peadon, P Rosser and R Wardell

There was 1 Member of the Public and no members of the press were present.

Parish Clerk N Tinley

Somerset Councillors Jason Baker and Connor Payne

Report from Somerset Councillors.

Councillor Connor Payne wished the Parish Council a Happy New Year and read from his report. A copy will be emailed to Councillors and placed on our website.

Councillor Jason Baker read from his report. A copy will be emailed to Councillors and placed on our website.

He answered questions from the Councillors about Somerset Council finances and devolution.

Councillor Baker left to attend another meeting.

01/24 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Rust: Resting leg after a knee injection.

02/24 Declarations of interest

Councillors Down, Matthey, Brown and Peadon re agenda item 15/24 Payments. Will leave the room.

03/24 To approve and sign as a correct record Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th December 2023

Proposed by Councillor Matthey, Seconded by Councillor Peake. All in favour.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Parish Council Meeting held on 7th December 2023 be signed as a correct record.

04/24 Chairman's Announcements

None.

05/24 To discuss applying for the local Council award, introduced by Councillor Rust

The Clerk explained his concerns over the amount of time needed to be allocated to this award and whether our website would be acceptable. We have a lot of challenges with devolution of services and a 12 month revisit would be the Clerk's recommendation.

Proposed by Councillor Brown, Seconded by Councillor Patay. All in favour.

RESOLVED: The Council will revisit this matter in 2025.

06/24 Discuss March Road closure and diversions by Wessex Water - Councillor Heal

There are two main concerns: the diversion is through School Lane rather than onto A358 and the effect on bus routes.

The Clerk had spoken to the Wessex Water project manager and the work is to replace dated pipework and insert bulk meter units to identify any future water leaks. A plastic pipe will be laid over the road to keep water supplied to residents. To protect the pipe no vehicles can drive over it.

Somerset Councillor Payne will communicate with highways concerning the diversion route and Councillor Chapple will talk to his contact at the Streetworks.

07/24 Environmental Issues - Litter and Winter Air Quality - Councillor Chapple

Councillor Chapple, a keen litter picker, is concerned with the deterioration of our local environment from litter, especially the lanes and main A358. The residential areas seem better. The quarterly voluntary litter picks are insufficient.

There are 3 options:

- 1) More litter bins. Currently Somerset Council will not empty additional bins.
- 2) Make schools aware, particularly secondary. Councillor Payne, a part-time teacher, stressed that schools are already looking at this.
- 3) Request volunteers to take charge of a specific area.

General discussion:

There is a need to get the villagers involved. Emphasise the recycling element. Put an article in the next newsletter. Communicate with the Community Offenders Scheme organiser re A358 litter.

Proposed by Councillor Heal, Seconded by Councillor Rosser. All in favour.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Chapple be authorised by the Parish Council to write a piece in the newsletter and organise volunteers, including the regular Sunday morning litter pick. The Clerk to supply Tim Eggins and Serena Woolton email details.

Councillor Chapple went on to explain his concerns over air quality in the Parish being adversely affected by wood burners. It was noted by other Councillors that in this period of crisis wood burning is the cheapest option for the poorer residents. Councillor Chapple responded by explaining that research shows that only around 8% of people who burn domestically are dependent on this as a form of heating. Somerset Councillor Payne proposed doing some testing on air quality.

08/24 Chard Museum- Tatworth and Forton stories - Councillor Peake

A letter from Chard Museum is asking for stories from Tatworth and Forton to be recorded before they are lost, and what facilities could the museum develop for the communities.

Councillor Peake will put an article together for the newsletter.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 8pm due to her childcare situation.

09/24 To approve the youth club working party's recommendation to provide a Fun Zone Youth Club for 2024/2025 at a cost including Hall Hire £6750

The Clerk explained the working party's review of the first 12 months of the Parish Youth Club facilities.

Two points noted: the aim of catering for all ages resulted in confusion and lack of consistency of provision and we have also lost the enthusiasm of the older children that joined back in February when the numbers were higher.

Since September our numbers have substantially reduced and only increased when younger age groups were allowed to join.

On a positive note, we have gained 6 volunteers of high quality.

The working party, including the providers, Active Learning & Skills, recommend that from April we concentrate on Fun Zone, years 1-6, ages 5-11. This would save £1000 off our budget for 2024-25.

Proposed by Councillor Matthey, Seconded by Councillor Heal. All in favour.

RESOLVED: The Parish Council will provide Fun Zone Youth Service from 7 April 2024.

10/24 Somerset Council Asset and Service Devolution - Update by Councillor Peake

Discussed in depth. There has been no useful information since December and no response to our emails. We are no further forward.

When more information is available we need to make an action plan of what services we wish to take over.

11/24 To agree the Parish budget for 2024-2025 excluding any devolution requirements as recommended by Finance committee

Resulting from lengthy discussions by the Finance Committee looking at each item individually. The resultant budget is £76,650 with a shortfall of £64,650 after anticipated income from the cemetery, allotments and bank interest. This is to be financed by precept and/or reserves. This budget is £6,238 less than last year.

Proposed by Councillor Matthey, Seconded by Councillor Peake. All in favour.

RESOLVED: The budget prepared by the Finance Committee is accepted by and adopted by the Parish Council.

It is noted that no cost for devolution services has been included.

12/24 To give an indication of the Finance Committee recommendation on 2024-2025 Precept excluding any devolution requirements, final decision must be made at our 1st February Full Council meeting

The Clerk reported that over the last few years our budget has exceeded income with the intention of reducing our savings. We have also used our reserves on larger projects, ie, cemetery car park, Garden of Remembrance extensions and Jubilee Field footpath.

The Finance Committee now feels we should be balancing our books and as a result reduced some budgets and propose to the Full Council an increase in the precept to cover the budget.

Therefore, the Finance Committee has recommended a precept at £65,000 which is about a 30% increase. For a Band D property an increase of our section of the Council Tax of £14.50 a year. This may well have to increase again to include devolution costs to be determined at our February Full Council meeting.

13/24 January newsletter dates and contents - Clerk

The newsletter needs to be ready by very early February – just after the precept is agreed.

There will be a section on our Chairman's contribution to the Parish.

Can all reports be with the Clerk by 23rd January.

14/24 Clerks Report

The office received several letters of thanks for the Christmas lunch.

We have been awarded a grant of £454 to supply extra items for the resilience shed, including hi-vis for wardens.

Councillors Down, Matthey and Peadon left the room.

Councillor Patay took over the chair.

15/24 Invoices for Payment:

Somerset Assc Local Councils (Councillor training)	£50.00 no VAT
Les Matthey (Bouquet flowers re Xmas lunch)	£20.00 Inc VAT
Tatworth Memorial Hall (front door key deposit)	£20.00 no VAT
Kaye Down (Xmas tree donation to School)	£30.00 no VAT
Eric Peadon (Bus Shelter Cleaning)	£180.00 no VAT
ICO. (Data protection fee)	£40.00 no VAT
Shaun Wareham (Tree planting/clearing rubbish from allotments to the recycling centre)	£95.00 no VAT
B E Powell & Sons (Maintenance contract)	£1997.70 Inc VAT

Burial Account

B E Powell & Sons (Maintenance contract) £2591.70 Inc VAT

Paid by Clerk

Bonemeal for tree planting £15.49 Inc VAT

Staff Salaries £1392.14 HMRC (Quarterly payment) £1110.92

Proposed by Councillor Heal, Seconded by Councillor Adams. All in favour.

RESOLVED: The payments have been approved.

The internet payments have been set up and signed by Councillor Adams. Councillor Peake will log on and authorise payment. Payment date set for Tuesday 16th January 2024.

The Councillors returned to the meeting.

16/24 Matters which the Councillors wish to report

Councillor Peadon Water running down side of Perry Street B3167 got very slippery in the cold period. Clerk to investigate and report to highways.

Councillor Matthey Any issues on the road can be reported via the Somerset Highways website. Please report as much as possible.

Councillors Local Community Network meeting in the Memorial Hall next week.

Councillor Peake Hedge on Waterlake Road overgrown – to be reported.

Councillor Heal Still waiting for warden training - rearranged for end of January.

Councillor Down

Had complaint over the standard of Blacklands Lane. Councillor Matthey had previously reported and will do so again.

Perry Street day nursery has closed so fortunate we had our grant returned.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 1st February 2024

Meeting closed 8:55pm