



TATWORTH AND FORTON PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting of Tatworth and Forton Parish Council held on Thursday 4th April 2019 at 7.00 pm in Tatworth Memorial Hall.

Present Chairman G Beattie supported by Councillors S Adams S Beattie J Davison R Digweed A Goody M Mercer J MacOmish J Payne and E Peadon together with the Parish Clerk B Poole

There was 36 members of the public present together with District Councillor Andrew Turpin and County Councillor Gemma Verdon.

APM19/1 Welcome

Chairman Mr George Beattie welcomed everyone to the meeting

APM19/2 Minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 30th April 2018

These were read by the Parish Clerk and at the conclusion of which were approved as being a correct record of what took place.

APM19/3 Chairman's Annual Report

Good evening ladies and gentlemen fellow councillors and guests thank you for coming. I am afraid I have left writing this speech till the last minute or should I say last night or even this afternoon.

I look back at my speech of last year when things were in a turmoil I am afraid to say things have only improved slightly. This year our clerk Paul Hayward resigned sighting unpleasant working practices with some councillors. So we had to employ a locum clerk for several months and he was only part time fortunately we were able to employ Bruce Poole who is a very experienced clerk and has helped to get the ship of Tatworth and Forton Parish Council back onto an even keel.

When I look back over the last 12 months I find it hard to believe that we actually achieved anything considering the disorder we have gone through.

I attended on behalf of the council the opening of Forton Community Association Hall which was opened by the late Paddy Ashdown. And have been to many meetings on the progress of the Persimmon development.

Jubilee field is still on going and a new gate for disabled access is now in situ and general maintenance is being carried out as and when required in the rest of the field.

We are still looking into the purchase of a Speed Indicator Device progress on this was thwarted by the County Council not taking responsibility for these and handing it over to local councils with all the costs of maintenance to be borne by the parish council.

This year we awarded grants Chard Carnival St John's Toddler group and Youth club Thorncomb bus and two grants to Forton one to the Forton Village Association for flower boxes and one to help towards the car park at Forton Association.

Part of the path around Coombses Pond was washed away and vandalised and had to be rebuilt with an extra emergency overflows. Vandalism is an ongoing problem at the pond as it seems to be the local sport to see how many logs can be thrown into the pond. We are looking into CCTV surveillance so that the site can be monitored 24/7.

Chard junction is still not opened though we and most of the local residents would like it reopened it would appear that no matter how many new houses are built in this area which attract more residents from outside there will never be enough money to warrant its reopening.

We have replaced the Dog bin at Forton and will soon replace the lid on the grit bin which must have been blown off in the gales unfortunately we are having trouble persuading the GPO to replace the letter box on Gulway Mead. What never ceases to amaze me is the number of small jobs that get done and are soon forgotten but we have had the flooding and road problem on Holway partially solved with a new river bank and the road repaired.

I wish to thank all those who work and devote their time to the upkeep of the cemetery especially Cllr. Peadon and wish I to report that we will be receiving the final draft of the suitability of the purchased land next to the cemetery for its use as a burial site.

We have engaged the services of a Rural Ranger and hopefully the Parish will benefit from their services and the parish will look more presentable.

May I also thank the members of RAG who held a litter pick recently a most worth while effort.

We maintain a good working relationship with the Somerset rights of way team who have erected missing finger posts and removed fallen trees etc though we are still waiting for work to commence on the culvert on Blacklands Lane and the footpath partially blocked next to the bus stop at Forton. I am led to believe that work on both projects is imminent. We will wait with bated breath. I am also informed that the right of way between Style End Farm and A358 is to have new styles and gate.

As you know there is an election next month where all councillors will be up for re-election but the Appraisal Committee has already tasked the Clerk with several projects getting the elected Councillors to submit to a 5yr plan, updating the lease on Coombses Pond Training for all councillors updates on the rent for Zembard Lane Car park and making sure the Council carries out some work on the problems of Dyke Hill a target I personally missed due to the problems of the council administration.

Our Clerk Bruce Poole has updated all our protocols website and put all council emails onto one common site to help if any future scrutiny is warranted councillors will not have their personal e-mails read through.

I wish to thank Bruce Poole who in the short time he has been with us has worked diligently to make sure the parish is run more professionally and I and most councillors are benefiting from his experience and a greater knowledge of collective responsibilities and hopefully if re- elected we will be able to drive this council forward as a collective body.

Finally I am pleased to announce that the precept for the parish will only increase by 3.9% compared with the overall increase for the District 4.8%

I would like to thank all councillors for their support over the past twelve months. As I mentioned there is an election next month and all councillors will be up for re-election it is now up to the parishioners of Tatworth and Forton to elect a new council.

It has been an honour to serve as chairman, it has been hard work and very frustrating but very rewarding. Thank you for your support and thanks for listening.

APM19/4 District and County Councillor Reports

District Councillor Andrew Turpin reiterated the problems that were being experienced in the planning department due to low staff numbers whereas County Councillor Gemma Verdon indicated that her April Report had been circulated to councillors that day and a copy had been placed on the council's web site.

APM19/5 Police Report

PCSO sent his apologies for non attendance but reported by way of a sent report which was read by the parish clerk.

"Generally quiet in the area with a spine in crime last week which saw 5 cars entered around school lane area and money stolen from within. It appears that "none" of these vehicles were locked which is disappointing but good that no damage was caused and also a timely reminder that we all need to take some responsibility for our own property.

Two sheds were also entered and items taken within once again these appear to have been unlocked the good news is that one strimmer has been recovered in a recent Police operation in Chard which will hopefully be returned to its owner tomorrow morning."

APM19/6 Budget & Precept

The Parish Clerk provided a broad outline to the 2019-20 Budget and Precept. He advised those present that the council's emphasis was to focus on supporting youth provision and speed awareness. The Council had also agreed to support a Rural Ranger scheme whereby works such gully cleansing hedge cutting tree removal. A facility would be set out on the web site whereby residents will be able to notify the parish clerk direct regarding works required to be undertaken.

The Budget had been fixed at £52,540 less projected income of £8,265 producing a net figure of £44,245. The council resolved that the precept should be fixed at £45,000 thus producing a net figure for the budget of £3,300 which would have to be funded through using council reserves. The agreed Precept was equivalent to a Band D Charge of £45.76 an overall increase on the previous year of £1.72 representing a 3.91% increase.

APM19/7 The Rural Ranger Scheme

It was noted that the meeting was expecting a presentation on the Rural Ranger Scheme but for some unexplainable reason the presenter had not arrived.

APM19/8 Thorncombe and Villages Bus Users and Supporters – TAVBUS

Mr and Mrs Marsh representing the TAVBUS scheme gave a very interesting account as to how the bus scheme supported by some funding from the Parish Council provided a once a week bus service to and from Chard. This was supported by a local resident who indicated that if it wasn't for the bus service he would be unable to access vital services in Chard.

The Chairman thanked all three for their interesting presentation.

APM19/9 Grant Recipients

There then followed presentations from a number of people representing organisations that had received grant funding in the past twelve months.

Chard Carnival Club

Claire Brown gave a very illuminating account as to how the grant had helped their club to have an even greater impact on the Chard Carnival 2018.

Forton Community Association

The Treasurer Mike Farthing explained how important it was to receive the grant from the Parish Council in order for the association to complete the work to the car park.

St John's Toddler Group and Youth Club.

Mrs J Knott (Churchwarden) gave an extensive outline of all the work and projects carried out by the church and its various organisations.

APM19/10 Concluding Remarks

The Chairman thanked the presenters for their willingness to come and explain to the meeting how the grant monies were used by their individual organisations. He also thanked all those who attended the meeting and then invited everyone to take part of the refreshments and drinks that had been supplied by Wendy's Kitchen.

The meeting concluded at 9.10 pm