

MINUTES OF FORD ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Held on Tuesday 25th April, 2023, 7pm in the Main Hall at Ford Village Hall

Present: Cllr. Alistair Horn (Chairman), Lisa Walton, Revd Greg Roberts, Bill Clyne, John Southan, Val Horn, Betty Carlyle, Michele Wells, Cllr. Roger Evans (Shropshire Council)

Clerk: Rebecca Turner

APM1/23 **CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME**

The chairman welcomed all present.

APM2/23 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

David Paterson, Nick Deane, Jack Pittaway, Tracey Greenside, Kat Robinson.

APM3/23 **MINUTES** – it was agreed to confirm that the minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting dated 26th April 2022 are a true record and the chairman was authorised to sign them.

APM4/23 **REPORTS**

a) *Annual Parish Council Report (Chairman)*

In 2022, Parish Council meetings returned to the more familiar setting of the Urwick Room at Ford Village Hall with the added benefit of being conducted face to face. Looking back over the past twelve months, my first full year in office, a few targets we set ourselves have been completed but, more importantly, I feel the aim to become more proactive is taking shape and we have several more projects on the go, all at different stages of development.

For the second year running further changes have taken place to the membership of Ford PC. We said goodbye to Sally Hanmer and Ray Collins whose tenure was all too brief and to Steve Jones who, over several years, many in the role of Chair, has contributed greatly to the work of this parish council. We thank them, and at the same time, welcome into the fold Michele Wells and Lisa Walton, both of whom have served as councillors in the past.

As part of our proactive approach to business, the parish council has set up a number of working groups. One of these was instrumental in the research behind the use of the S106 money from the Cross Gates Meadow development. A community survey resulted in the installation of adult fitness equipment at the recreation ground. This is soon to be followed by a total revamp of the adjacent children's playground.

The parish council has joined with Shropshire Council's Outdoor Partnership service and set up a Parish Paths Partnership group, whose aim is to improve public rights of way in Ford Parish. Several projects have been completed to date, with more planned for 2023. An oak tree was planted on Manor Crest as part of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations but also commemorating her service to the country following her sad death in September. In association with the school a time capsule is to be buried near the site depicting life in Ford and the whole of the UK in 2023.

Work has commenced on investigating improvements to the aspect as drivers enter Ford - the so-called public realm improvements. This has involved utilising local expertise from interested members of the community.

Sadly, despite all our efforts, channels of communication and visits from local police officers have diminished to almost zero and this is a key area of concern that the Parish Council will continue to pursue this year.

A working group involving interested members of the community was set up to investigate the feasibility of providing allotments in the village. Sadly, the working group concluded that the current lack of available land was the limiting factor in pursuing this project further at this time.

The dark cloud that is Community Hub status still looms large above us. Representatives from the parish council and an employed consultant were present, and contributed to, the discussions when planning inspectors visited Shropshire last summer to discuss the Local Plan. With the ongoing support from the community, parish councillors will continue to oppose Shropshire Council's plans to confer Community Hub status on our village and thereby open Ford to further significant development.

The Parish Council continues to support the production of a quarterly newsletter, delivered free to all households in the parish. It is generally well received and provides an important communication channel.

In other business we continue to monitor a pilot project in neighbouring parishes which is aimed at reducing speeding traffic. A councillor attended a meeting with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner to express our concerns at local policing issues and we continue to have representations on the Village Hall Committee and on SALC (Shropshire Association of Local Councils). This year the parish council adopted a revised Code of Conduct, to which all councillors added their signatures. It wouldn't be a parish council meeting without planning issues. These always have been and will continue to be a regular part of our agenda.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to our local Shropshire Councillor, Roger Evans, for his continued support of our community and the sound advice he imparts at all our meetings. Thanks also to Rebecca, our clerk who, amongst all her other work, guides us through the agenda of meetings, avoiding many pitfalls along the way.

There is no doubt that 2023 and beyond will hold many significant challenges for Ford Parish Council to face but I believe that current band of councillors, with the support of the community, are well equipped to overcome the obstacles ahead and I would like to thank them all for their continued hard work and commitment to the post they hold.

b) Finance Report 2022/3(Clerk)

The clerk summarised the accounts a copy of which are below:

Budget report & bank reconciliation Q4 2022/3

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>Actual 2021/2</u>	<u>Budget 2022/3</u>
Precept	£23,823.00	£23,553.00
Neighbourhood Fund (CIL)	£0.00	
Bank Interest	£1.80	£1.00
VAT refund	£3,862.61	
Defib donations	£20.00	£0.00
S106 Open Space	£0.00	£0.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£27,707.41	£23,600.00

<u>PAYMENTS</u>	<u>Actual 2021/2</u>	<u>Budget 2022/3</u>	<u>Q4 2022/3</u>
Administrative & Establishment Costs			
Clerk's Salary (incl. pension)	£7,793.97	£7,987	£12,101.76
Office Expenses	£800.62	£750	£286.00
Mileage	£94.95	£200	£75.60
Website	£209.59	£210	£200.00
Training/AGM (Clerk/Councillors)	£60.00	£250	£0.00
Hire of meeting rooms	£246.00	£100	£113.00
Audit (Internal & External)	£40.00	£250	£280.00
Insurance	£598.63	£617	£607.24
Subscriptions (SALC)	£350.84	£420	£382.35
ICO Registration	£35.00	£35	£35.00
Elections	£0.00	£100	£100.00
GDPR	£155.55	£163	£0.00
Councillor expenses		£0	£13.69
Sub Total Admin & Establishment	£10,385.15	£11,082	£14,194.64
Recreation Ground / Parish Hall			
Grounds Maintenance contract	£1,960.00	£1,960	£2,102.50
Caretaker contract	£170.87	£1,000	£999.96
Additional grounds maintenance	£717.00	£500	£1,154.88
Maintenance/purchase of play equipment	£904.95	£3,000	£12,063.43
Inspections	£728.00	£900	£763.00
Bin collection	£138.00	£140	£145.00
Sub Total Recreation Ground / Parish Hall	£4,618.82	£7,500	£17,228.77
Street Lighting			
Electricity	£441.60	£525	£437.56
Maintenance / Inspections	£366.90	£420	£300.00
PWLB	£1,283.54	£1,283	£1,283.54
Sub Total Street Lighting	£2,092.04	£2,228	£2,021.10
Projects /grants			
Newsletter	£552.00	£1,000	£1,139.00
Citizen of the Year	£30.84	£40	£39.24
Defibrillator	£370.00	£50	£45.00
GPC	£0.00	£450	£596.24
Local Plan Examination	£0.00	£1,250	£1,899.00
Sub total Projects /grants	£952.84	£2,790	£3,718.48
Other			
Other	£38.11	£0	£0.00
Sub Total other	£38.11	£0	£0.00
VAT	£1,091.34	£0	£3,937.64
GRAND TOTAL PAYMENTS	£19,178.30	£23,600	£41,100.63

c) *Shropshire Council*
 Cllr. Evans gave his report.

Questions/observations from Betty Carlyle:

- *£51 million deficit* was equivalent to what was paid for the shopping centres.

- **NWRR** - £23 million spent and not even gone to planning. Cllr. Evans agreed with this opinion. Business Plan from SC not published as yet. MP is on record as asking for further £30 million towards NWRR.
- **Neighbourhood Plan** – noted that its legally binding and suggested it goes on next parish council agenda. Cllr. Evans confirmed it is worth doing. Builds on Shropshire’s Local Plan – can’t reduce it can only add to it.

Michele Wells – concerned re how much council spends on consultants. Does anyone monitor expenditure on consultants given SC should have in-house consultants? It was noted that the management advice consultants are the same ones who advised on the purchase of the shopping centres.

d) *Police Report*

None.

e) *Neighbourhood Watch*

Invite missed in error.

f) *Trinity CofE Primary School*

Trinity CofE Primary School has continued to maintain high-quality education for children, which was recognised in our most recent Ofsted inspection in November 2022, grading the school as ‘Good’. The inspection was extremely positive with Ofsted highlighting many areas of strength, including that the school is “ambitious for all pupils and has thought carefully about how to make the curriculum meet the needs of mixed-age classes”. Please visit our website to view the full Ofsted report. The Governing Body is extremely pleased with the Ofsted result. It should be highlighted that the school has continued to develop and improve since the previous inspection in 2017, and that we are very proud of what has been achieved, working together as an entire school community, especially considering that the ‘goalposts’ have moved considerably, increasing the expectations on schools, with the introduction of a new inspection framework.

The school has done remarkably well considering the ever-increasing pressures and challenges in education over the past couple of years, and we were delighted to receive such great feedback and a good report for our efforts and dedication. We will continue to provide the best education and learning environment that we possibly can for our pupils to flourish and to allow them to continue ‘to be the best they can be’.

We have continued to hold many events throughout the year, such as a KS1 Nativity and KS2 Carols around the Tree concert for parents in December. We have also attended sporting competitions throughout the Autumn and Spring Terms, winning numerous tournaments, including the Shrewsbury School Games Athletics. We have also reached 3 FA Football Finals which will be played in May. We have lots more activities planned for the Summer Term, including the King’s Coronation celebrations, Friends of Trinity Summer Fair and the Year 5/6 residential to Manchester.

We have continued to work closely with The Reverend Greg Roberts to develop our church-school links, most recently attending St Michaels, Ford for a Mothering Sunday Service which our choir took part in, as well as a whole school Easter Service on the last day of Spring Term. We have many planned events with Greg in the Summer Term, including the Archbishop of York Young Leader’s Award unit of work and special service with our Year 5 & 6 pupils.

Last term, the school supported Darren Edwards’ World Marathon Challenge. Trinity was set the challenge by Darren Edwards, a local disabled adventurer, to run 180 miles

collectively, as a school, over the week that he completed the World Marathon Challenge: 7 days, 7 continents, 7 marathons. Darren completed his challenge and so did Trinity, raising £1025 for Darren's charity, to help fund his next community project. Darren came in to speak with the children about his challenge which was very inspiring.

The school's site security has improved with a newly installed security fence and intercom system at the front of the school. The school maintains its 'Safer Schools' accreditation. There have been no incidents of vandalism or trespassing on the school site for nearly 12 months, and we hope this continues.

The school remains very popular, and demand has continued to grow over the past 12 months. We currently have 159 pupils on roll in 5 mixed-aged classes. The school is close to capacity with only 6 spaces left (2 in Rec, 2 in Year 4 & 2 in Year 6). We are expecting 22 children to join the school in September 2023.

We will be looking forward to the Summer Term ahead with many exciting events and activities planned.

g) *Ford Village Hall* – report from Kat Robinson

Improvements to date:

- New Heating System within the Main Hall.
- Upgrade to security lighting outside.
- Interior Painting to Main Hall to modernise the appearance for hirers.
- A ramp for wheelchair access to the rear Urwick Room Door.
- 2 designated Disabled parking spaces to the front of the Hall
- Water Heaters replaced in the Gents Toilet & the Kitchen.

Planned improvements:

- Hardwood parquet floor being sanded & refinished with Lacquer week of the 29th May.
- Further Electric & USB sockets to Urwick Room.
- Sensor Light to side store to prevent waste of electricity.
- Racking to Storeroom to increase & improve storage capacity.

Regular Hirers:

- New hirers include Brownies (girls aged 7-10) began October 2022 on Wednesdays after school.
- Rainbows (girls aged 4-7) every Tuesday beginning today after school.
- Yoga commenced last May, every Thursday evening.

Fundraising/Community Events:

- Queens Jubilee Afternoon Tea for over 70's.
- Plant pot Design Competition.
- Fantastic Halloween Pumpkin Trail.
- Sunday Breakfast Club. September & March.
- Regular Bingo evenings throughout the winter beginning with Christmas Bingo.
- Cinderella The Panto February.
- *Next Panto Planned for February 2024*
-

Committee:

- Successful recruitment of 1 new member in 2022.
- A further 2 so far this year. This will be a total of 7.
- Member roles remain the same.

Overall:

There is an overall increase in the hire of the hall, particularly for children's parties. This is fantastic as increased awareness within the younger community is essential for the ongoing future success of the hall as a community resource.

h) St Michael's Church, Ford

Your Church needs You!

When I applied to be Rector here the profile describing the parishes was inviting and welcoming and of several encouraging points one particular phrase seemed to summarise the group:

“The six churches offer history, beauty, and simplicity. Each has something different to offer as a key part of the community. We are happy and blessed to live in this area and are looking for an individual or family to join us, to share our home and help us grow spiritually.”

Indeed, the churches really do offer history, beauty and simplicity. You may have heard me say or have read that I've been struck by the high number of christenings, weddings and funerals that we welcome into the churches. Families gather who have deep roots, often going back many generations, in each community. Sometimes there are more people outside than can fit inside. I see in this area, where I grew up, that a number of shops, garages, pubs, post offices and chapels have closed. In a way it is a miracle that the churches are still present. A testament to the dedication and service of parishioners and church officers. Some have served for several decades – I see their names as I look back at magazines from 10, 20, 30, 40 years ago. The churches are still here a generation or so after their predicted demise. Yet with the pandemic and changes in society their future is very much in the balance now as it is for so many rural churches. I don't want people to say to me, Greg, if only we had known the situation, we could have helped, we could have done something.

Parish churches were typically built, and maintained by their communities, for the community. Each church is a charity. Those who serve on the Church Councils or hold roles such as Church Warden, Secretary, Treasurer, Safeguarding officer etc are both volunteers and serve the churches as trustees for each community. The churches are not owned by the Church of England or Hereford Diocese. (though I suppose that if we just 'hand over' the keys then that is where money and land could go)

Your Church needs You! The churches as bodies of people need engagement if they are to be present, offering their sacred spaces, their history, beauty and simplicity for future generations. Or not ! Just as we travel to Welshpool or Shrewsbury for the supermarket maybe we will travel to those places for worship. The choice is in our own hands. The more hands that are willing in each place the more possible it is to not just keep the churches open but to see them flourish and grow.

Churches can be places of welcome, of friendship, of community and service. You may know that the churches provide 3 cheers, a space of welcome with refreshments

and cake, in 3 communities. You many know that we have regular and sustained involvement with the young people in the schools. And the ministerial team are regularly involved with funeral ministry.

Your Church needs You! Yes, we are busy, yes there are family events, sporting events, community events to attend and for many people working life is harder and more stressful than perhaps it used to be. Yet, if I may be so bold, we can make time for what we deem important. Your Church needs You! Please don't wait to be asked. I don't know the skills and interests of the people who live in the communities.

I write to encourage involvement. Then together we can work out the best way forward. Closure of buildings is a last resort. It would be a decision taken by the Church Council in any place and not by any central body. I really hope it won't come to that. As we move forward the question is going to be – does the community wish for the churches to be present and open week by week as now. I foresee that in a matter of months we could need to move to a different model by which the churches are perhaps maintained by some type of heritage body and opened only for special occasions. But, this still requires groups to maintain fabric, finance and insurance.

In our national discourse there are voices that criticise the church, and indeed there are things that the church over time has got badly wrong, and question why for instance, churches are involved in education, or are involved with national events or have bishops in the Lords. We often forget how much of what makes up our national life stems from the Christian understanding of what it is to be human and a precious child of God. So, Christians have been at the forefront of:

The development of healthcare – infirmaries provided by monasteries for instance and the founding of hospitals. The provision of education – churches often provided school in the Victorian era. Christians campaigned for the abolition of slavery, the promotion of human rights, they started numerous charities big and small (Christian Aid, Oxfam, The Samaritans, YMCA....)

In recent times churches have been at the forefront of providing foodbanks, nigh shelters, debt advice, and welcome to groups coming to this country such as Ukrainians and the Hong King Chinese.

Sometimes I hear people speak of 'the church' as if it was something 'other'. It is not. The church is what we do together. The sense of church is of the calling together of an army for action. And when I listen to the news and hear the national discourse, I sense we have moved from our Christian roots and are diminished as a result as what is then left is just the promotion of the self. Rather than acting for one's own gain Christianity, and the other great world religions, point people away from self and to others. So, we find that values such as Compassion appear across the religions.

And so, I write to invite you to be involved in church life. Your Church needs You!

Information about the Ford Group, services and events, can be found: in our magazine, on notice boards, on our Weekly sheet in church, and on our Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/fordgroupofchurches>

If you are interested in finding about various ways of serving the community as a church member then this page outlines various lay roles such as Local Pastoral Visitor, Local Worship Leader, Local Missioner, Local Minister.

<https://www.hereford.anglican.org/ministry/local-ministry/>

Then there are practical roles in looking after the fabric of the buildings or managing money as part of a Church Council. Whatever the future, the churches need an income to maintain and insure the buildings and to pay for any administrative support that could lighten the load on ageing and busy church officers. Parish Giving: For more details on ways to help please see <https://www.parishgiving.org.uk/home/>

Bell tower needs repairing, looking at heating. Like others church living off savings. Group campaigning at Westminster and doing a “save the parishes” campaign.

With every blessing,
Greg, The Rev'd Gregory Roberts
Rector of Ford, Great Wollaston and Alberbury with Cardeston with Wattlesborough

TheRevdGregRoberts@Outlook.com

i) Ford Parish Paths Partnership

Cllr. Horn reported. New venture parish council started working jointly with SC's Outdoor Partnership service. Band of 6 people who volunteer at various times. Issues such as gates, stiles, overgrown footpaths. Following 2020 paths survey, 4 more major projects then monitoring and responding to issues that arise. Most paths have good access points.

j) Any other parish organisation

Val spoke as parish council caretaker – the lack of dog mess is very good and the waste is being put in the bins. She thanked children who help pick up the litter. A metal frame by the brook needs removing – clerk to ask Landright Services to remove it. The meeting thanked the caretaker for her hard work.

APM5/23 **CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2022** – *Presentation Of Award* –
Two nominations received.

The 2022 recipient is Lisa Harries – Congratulations! She is a long-time villager, having lived most if not all of her life in Ford. She is very knowledgeable about people, village affairs and cares for the welfare of residents. She is described as “one of the saints”, a key person in church, being a church warden. She cares for both the fabric of the church and its contents and looks after the churchyard and is treasurer. She coordinates delivery of 80 newsletters and volunteers on the 3 Cheers Group. She combines all this with shift work as a nurse.

APM6/23 **FORD PARISH BOUNDARY** – *potential changes*

Cllr. Evans explained the potential changes – SC are proposing that the boundary for Shrewsbury stays within A5. This could mean part of Bicton parish goes into Longden division. Ford may have a choice of extending its boundary to there or towards Pontesbury. It was suggested that the boundary also follows the Montgomery Road, therefore including Ford Heath within Ford. There will be consultation later this year on parish boundaries.

APM6/23 **OPEN FORUM**
No matters raised.

APM7/23 **DATE OF ANNUAL PARISH MEETING 2024 - 16th April 2024, 7pm**

Meeting closed at 8.35pm