

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 29th November 2017 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

Present: Cllr Connolly - Chairman

Cllrs Adams, Anstey, Earth, Fulford, Hale, Lewendon, Paton, Perkins, Price, White & Wilson

In attendance: Mrs H Richards, Town Clerk
Mrs R Edwards, Assistant Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer

1. To receive any apologies for absence

No apologies for absence were received.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Cllr Adams declared an interest in Agenda item 5, Monies collected & Payment of Accounts as supplier to the Council – Cllr Adams remained in the meeting but did not speak or vote on this item.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 25th October 2017 and report any matters arising

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Anstey and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th October 2017 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters Arising

Minute No. 5 – The Assistant Town Clerk forwarded HMRC's VAT requirements for block bookings to Turks football club.

Minute No. 6 – internal audit took place 6th November 2017. The report was circulated to members. Five issues were raised – lengthsman scheme, cash figure on the annual return, old debtor balances, staff contracts and risk review. The RFO and Clerk will take these forward.

Cllr White entered the meeting

Minute No. 7 – The Finance Officer met with the Youth Steering Group and Jamie Burton (NFDC) to discuss the Skate Park replacement. The consultation period will end on 30th November. It has become apparent that the different Skate Park user groups have different requirements. NFDC have indicated that as long as the project is live then the grant will still be available.

Minute No. 8 – The Town Clerk negotiated a 3 year Christmas Lights contract in place of the proposed 5 year contract.

Minute No. 13 – The Town Clerk has withdrawn her resignation.

4. To receive any matters raised by Members Of the Public

No members of the public present.

5. To receive details of Monies Collected & Payment of Accounts

The finance officer (RFO) summarised the financial activity for November, noting the following items –

Income – A donation of £2000 has been received towards the Christmas Lights from Rotary and another donation of £1440 towards the street entertainment.

Expenditure – The boilers in the Memorial Bungalow and the Town Hall have now been serviced. The leaflet stand and display boards for the VIC have been purchased.

Cllr Perkins queried the amount spent on the BT Onebill and what this covered. The RFO confirmed it covered all phones and broadband for the VIC, workshop and main office.

6. To receive an update from the Clerk regarding the Town Hall Roof / Council Chamber

The Conservation Officer visited the Town Hall. Stripping out of the panelling can begin with listed building consent by exchange of letter.

Cllr Adams asked if someone else could do the carpentry. The Town Clerk confirmed this would be possible.

It was noted that Standing Orders and Financial Regulations may need to be suspended for this project to enable an appropriate contractor (listed building and timescale) to be appointed.

Cllr Connolly reassured members that the project is in hand and moving as quickly as it can.

7. To consider the following Grant Applications

No grant applications were received during this month.

8. To receive and discuss a recommendation from the Staff & Remuneration Committee for the engagement of a Human Resources provider

The Staff & Remuneration committee recommended that Ellis Whittam be appointed for personnel advice. They are a Human Resources provider which deals with Local Government and a variety of Councils. The cost would be £2500pa for a three year contract.

Cllr Lewendon proposed it was seconded by Cllr Fulford and therefore **RESOLVED:** that Ellis Wittam should be engaged as the Human Resources provider for a period of three years. All in favour.

9. To agree funding to enable Assistant Clerk to undertake CiLCA qualification

Cllr Lewendon proposed it was seconded by Cllr Anstey and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the Assistant Clerk could be funded to undertake the CiLCA qualification. All in favour.

Action: Assistant Town Clerk to book place on course.

10. To discuss the renewal of the Kiosk Concession lease

The Kiosk lease is due to expire at the end of the year. The RFO has spoken with the solicitor and is awaiting confirmation whether the continuation of the lease can be done by exchange of letter.

Action: RFO to progress the Kiosk Concession lease renewal.

11. To receive and discuss a recommendation from the Amenities Committee for budget proposals for 2018/19

The additional costs of upgrading and improving the Memorial Grounds in time for the WW1 commemorations in November 2018 were discussed. A proposed figure of approximately £15000 would provide a legacy benefit into future years, allowing the Memorial Garden paths to be replaced. It was noted that this could be funded from reserves.

Cllr Anstey proposed it was seconded by Cllr Fulford and therefore **RESOLVED:** to remove the proposed £15000 from the maintenance budget for the Memorial Gardens redevelopment and to review at the next Finance and Policy meeting. All in favour.

The Amenities budget proposal is £97800; precept request of £79050.

12. To receive and discuss a recommendation from the General Purposes Committee for budget proposals for 2018/19

Staff costs will be going up in the coming year because of the increased opening hours of the Visitor Information Centre. It was agreed to cut the proposed Town Hall - Routine Maintenance allowance from £6000 to £3000 and the same for the Town Hall - Repair Maintenance budget.

Cllr Earth proposed it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED:** to accept the proposed budget with the changes mentioned above. All in favour.

The General Purposes budget proposal is £85575; precept request of £37247.

13. To consider the budget proposals for the Finance & Policy Committee for 2018/19

The proposed budget was discussed. Members agreed to approve a 2% overall increase on precept. The final figure will be £198550.

Action: Finance officer to email out revised budget to members for approval in January.

14. To formulate a resolution to go before General Council on 3rd January 2018 for the precept request

Cllr Adams proposed it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED:** to bring forward the budget vote to a Finance and Policy meeting on 3rd January 2018. All in favour.

15. To note any items of correspondence

No items of correspondence were received this month.

16. To receive a report from the Clerk or any other relevant business

The Clerk had nothing further to report.

17. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 3rd January 2018

The meeting closed at 9.01pm.

Fordingbridge Town Council – Project Updates

Finance & Policy Committee 25th October 2017

Town Hall Roof/Clock Tower Repairs

Friday 13th October 2017 – Mike Rickman on site with cherry picker & applied sealant to clock tower as agreed.

Kevin Jones (KJ), Sheerin Bettle, attended site and inspected further damage to the north elevation in the Council Chamber – originally thought to be caused by faulty guttering. Upon further externally inspection of the roof & tower it is unclear what the problem is. The roof appears to be satisfactory and indications are that water is getting in via the clock tower and either travelling along the rafters/roof trusses or getting under the roofing felt under the tiles. As there is no internal access from above the Council Chamber ceiling, the only option would be to strip the roof to source the problem.

Kevin has been supplied with information from Harvey & Snowdon, prepared in 2003/2004 when the affected rafter was partially replaced. KJ will contact Harvey & Snowdon to discuss and possibly R Moulding (the Contractor who implemented the works).

With regard to removal of damaged panels in Council Chamber, KJ to speak with Conservation Officer before removal is undertaken.

Town Hall/Information Office – Office Accommodation

Since August and the employment of a second member of staff at the Information Office, it has been open to the public 5 days a week and will continue to do so throughout the year. New Members of staff have trained up to offer more flexibility across the 2 offices, with the Assistant Clerk able to provide cover at the Information Office and Information Officers now taking on tasks from the Town Hall. In order to utilise the front line service now available at the Information Office 5 days a week it is proposed to direct all general enquiries to the Info Office from **30th October 2017**. This will necessitate closing the Town Hall to the Public except by appointment. This will enable professional officers at the Town Hall to focus on more detailed tasks. This new method of service delivery will be trialled for a 3 month period. During this period initiatives should also be put into place to increase the transfer of information to the Info Office and available to all in a digital format; with improved IT, review of the website and the introduction of regular staff meetings.

The Council must now agree the future provision of services, the accommodation required to provide those services and how this project will be undertaken.

H Richards
Town Clerk
19.10.17