

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 24th April 2019 at 7.30pm in
the Town Hall
(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)**

Present: Cllr Adams - Chairman

Cllrs Anstey, Hale, Lewendon, Mouland, Paton, Perkins, White & Wilson

In attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk

Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer (RFO)

One Member of the Public

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Earth.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Cllrs Adams declared a pecuniary interest in item no. 5 Monies Collected and Payment of Accounts as a supplier to the Council and would remain in the room but not speak or vote.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2019 and report any matters arising

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th March 2019 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters Arising

- Minute no. 3 – Skate Park: Cllr Paton raised the condition of the banks either side of the completed Skate Park. The RFO advised that the final account for the Skate Park from the contractor had been sent to the Town Council's Buildings Manager. The Buildings Manager had raised a concern regarding the top soil used but the prevailing weather conditions and the holidays may also have impacted on the condition of the banks. Cllrs mentioned the possibility of artificial grass as an alternative to seeded grass. The RFO will liaise with the contractor regarding options and reported there was a twelve month defects liability period.

Action: The RFO to liaise with the contractor regarding the Skate Park banks.

Cllr Perkins entered the room.

- Minute no. 15 – Play Equipment: The Town Clerk advised that he had been liaising with the vendor of the second hand play equipment and had agreed the purchase in principle subject to conditions being met regarding the condition of the equipment. The Town Council's play equipment inspectors had advised against the purchase of the larger wooden equipment and, based upon that advice, the Town Clerk had enquired regarding the purchase of the smaller non-wooden equipment. The vendor believes he has potential buyer for all of the equipment but will revert to the Town Council if the potential buyer is not interested in the smaller equipment.

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

No matters raised.

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

See Appendix A for the Finance Officer's summary of the April 2019 accounts.

Income: The RFO noted the receipt of block booking payments from the Whippet and Rugby Clubs, funds from the Football Club, the final lease payment for the kiosk for 2018/2019, the 2019/2020 Lengthsman funds, CIL funds (the RFO provided a break down of the CIL funds) and the Events Group contribution.

Expenditure: non-regular items include:

- Payment to the contractor for the new Skate Park (which was part funded by s106 funds and a grant from New Forest District Council).
- CILCA registration for the Assistant Town Clerk
- Hampshire Fire Protection for repairs to the fire panel – The RFO advised that when the Town Hall comes to being reinstated after the works there is potential, given its age, that the panel won't comply.
- Clock Service
- Our Town volunteers' insurance
- SSE emergency call out charge to repair a cable at the Recreation Ground
- PRS annual music licence
- Ringwood Skips charge for tyres in the skip hired to clear up the allotments
- Zurich – Insurance premium for the Skate Park
- Glasdon – Bench Plaque to be reimbursed
- Ashbury Heating – Emergency pipe repair in the Pavilion
- SSE – The quarterly bill was higher than usual as the previous quarter was based upon an estimate. Members discussed the use of the heating at the Pavilion.

Action: The RFO to liaise with the groundsman regarding the use of the heating at the Pavilion.

- Annual Data Protection Fee

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the April 2019 accounts. All in favour.

6. To receive a report on the annual accounts for 2018/19

The RFO reported that members had already received a report on the finances and the overspend for the year will be around £18,000 primarily due to the costs of work on the Town Hall.

The internal audit is scheduled for 28th May 2019 at the Information Office. Cllr Adams confirmed that he could attend the audit.

7. To consider grant applications under Section 137

Cllrs considered a grant application from Victim Support and discussed the accounts of the organisation and the history of payments made by the Town Council to the organisation.

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED** that the Town Council should pay £100 to Victim Support. There were no alternative proposals. All in favour.

8. To agree to enter a contract to undertake the Town Hall work

The Clerk reported that a limited letter of intent was issued to the preferred contractor on 18th March 2019. A pre contract meeting was held with the architects, the Building Manager and the contractor. A pavement licence for the scaffolding is in place from 29th April 2019. A schedule of conditions and an agreement with the properties adjoining the Town Hall is being finalised. The contractor's insurances have been passed to the Town Council's insurers. The proposed commencement date for the work is 29th April 2019 and the proposed date of completion is 30th August 2019. A cash flow and schedule of works has been provided by the contractor. The next stage would be to issue a full letter of intent and then for the Town Council to enter into a contract with the preferred contractor.

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore **RESOLVED** that a full letter of intent should be issued to the preferred contractor and the Town Council should enter into a contract with the preferred contractor to undertake the Town Hall works. All in favour.

The RFO reported that the staff at the Town Hall were relocating to the Information Office on 25th April 2019. Cllr Paton asked whether the Town Council would get a reduction in rates on the Town Hall if it was not occupied.

Action: The RFO to check the position regarding rates.

9. To consider and approve the architects fee proposal for the Town Hall work

The Clerk reported that the architects had provided a fee proposal on 29th March 2019 which had been circulated to members. The proposed cost for the remaining duration of the work was a fixed cost of £8,750 plus VAT. The cost is based upon the architect's assessment of the time that is required to complete the work. The Town Council's Building Manager has been through the assessment with the architect and believes that the proposed cost is reasonable.

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Wilson and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the architects fee proposal of 29th March 2019 in relation to the Town Hall work. All in favour.

10. To resolve to borrow to finance the Town Hall repairs

The RFO advised that members had to resolve to borrow funds. The RFO had slightly enhanced her previous report to meet the requirement of the Public Works Loan Board ("PWLB") to show that the Council can afford the loan repayments and done an element of public consultation. The RFO proposed a PWLB loan of £110,000 repayable over a period of twenty-five years with a review of cash requirements towards the end of the Town Hall contract regarding any required contingency or unforeseen expenses. If the costs are higher it may be necessary to borrow more or utilise CIL funds. The RFO advised that there were insufficient funds held in reserves and recommended securing a loan of £110,000.

Members discussed the repayment mechanism for PWLB loans, early settlement, the amount that should be borrowed, the likely total repayment. Members also discussed the structure of funding using Reserves, CIL and loan funds and considered the balance between committing the Town Council to a long-term loan obligation and the necessity of ensuring adequate reserves were maintained at an appropriate level.

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore **RESOLVED** to seek approval of the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for a PWLB loan of £110,000 over the borrowing term of 25 years for remedial repair work to the Town Hall. The annual loan repayments will come to around £7,000. It is not intended to increase the council tax precept in 2020/21 for the purpose of the loan repayments. All in favour.

11. To receive an update from the Clerk regarding the Christmas Lights

The RFO reported that she was continuing to liaise with Highways at Hampshire County Council regarding their requirements in respect of replacing the pole required for the Christmas Lights. The RFO reported that she had drafted a press release regarding the funding of the Christmas Lights and had received comments back from Cllr White. The RFO was awaiting comments from the Christmas Lights contractor and the representative from the Business Forum. Once agreed, the press release will be issued following the forthcoming elections.

12. To approve the revised use of S106 Funds

The RFO reported that she and the Clerk had met with NFDC regarding the allocated s106 funds. An agreement was reached whereby the balance of funds of circa £137k would be allocated to the Pavilion. NFDC indicated that it would look favourably (from its CIL) at the Council's plans for the Council's other open spaces and play areas. The RFO reported that NFDC would like the funds to be utilised over the next twelve months.

The member of the public suggested utilising the s106 funds to partly fund the Town Hall work. The RFO advised that s106 funds could only be used in relation to open spaces.

The RFO reported that NFDC were to come up with a proposal for the Pavilion and that the RFO had sent previous plans to the NFDC estates team to assist. NFDC had indicated that additional funding from the RFU and FA may also be available.

Cllr Adams proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Moulard and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the reallocation of funds to the Pavilion.

13. To receive an update from the Clerk regarding Playscheme funding

The RFO advised that there was nothing further to report as the Council were waiting on the Playscheme manager for information regarding this year's Playscheme.

Action: Town Clerk to include as agenda point for next Finance & Policy Committee meeting

14. To approve continued membership/affiliation of HALC/NALC

Members considered the ongoing benefits of membership.

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Anstey and therefore **RESOLVED**: to approve the continued membership/affiliation of HALC/NALC. All in favour.

15. To note any items of correspondence

No items of correspondence.

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

Nothing to report.

17. To note the date of the next meeting as 29th May 2019

The meeting closed at 8:13 p.m.