

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd October 2019 at 7.30pm
in the Town Hall**

(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Council)

Present: Cllr Anstey – Chairman
Cllrs Adams, Earth, Goldsmith, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Mouland, Paton, Perkins, White & Wilson

In Attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllrs Sevier and Bellows (NFDC)
Katy Griffin (Salisbury Journal)

1. To receive any apologies for absence

No apologies received.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest

3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th September 2019 and to report on any matters arising

Cllr Lewendon requested the following changes to item 15 of the minutes:

Cllr Lewendon gave an update on the issue of parked cars causing obstruction on Salisbury Street. He advised that the ~~local~~ *Fordingbridge* resident ~~who'd originally petitioned~~ *who arranged the original petition* to the Council on this subject had agreed to join the working party. *However, the working party was unable to get a resident of Salisbury Street to join. Also that* Cllr Heron (HCC) has said he'd meet on site one evening to see the situation for himself.

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Mouland and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 4th September 2019, with the amendment above, are signed as a true record.

Matters arising:

Agenda item 10. Additional responses to planning questions have been received from Claire Upton-Brown since the last General Council meeting

4. To receive any matters raised by members of the public

No matters raised.

5. To receive a report on any matters under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act

No report received.

6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor reported on the following:

7th Sept – Met with Fordingbridge Greener Living group, discussed proposed market.

10th Sept – Network meeting in Fordingbridge, attended group meeting and spoke with organiser.

15th Sept – Battle of Britain service at St Mary's Church.

During the month – email correspondence with Revd Canon Gary Philbrick regarding Remembrance Sunday.

The Mayor reported that there will be a neighbourhood plan working party meeting tomorrow evening. Findings and recommendations will be brought to Council as to whether to pursue a neighbourhood plan, but this decision cannot be made on behalf of the Council. Mayor Anstey will facilitate and chair the meeting.

The Mayor mentioned the Twinning Committee and the trip to Vimoutiers later this month. Cllr Paton is the Council representative on the committee.

7. To receive a report from the County Councillor

No report received.

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Bellows reported that NFDC had undertaken an electoral review with the conclusion that the number of Councillors should be reduced from 60 to 48. This recommendation has gone forward to the electoral committee to review. Cllr Bellows sits on the Task and Finish group looking at the number of Councillors; she reported that Fordingbridge would retain two district Councillors. Under the polling station review both Cllr Bellows and Cllr Sevier recommended that the polling station remain in the Town Hall in Fordingbridge.

Cllr Bellows attended an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) meeting at Cranborne Chase which she found very interesting. She learnt under what circumstances planning permission is granted or refused in an AONB and why.

Cllr Sevier reported that an extra 57 Council houses have been built, bringing the total to over 5000 properties. Applicants must apply online and different criteria now exist so that those most in need have priority. Gone are the days of waiting for ten years for a house and being given one ahead of those who need it more.

Cllr Sevier reported that only five year tenancies are now granted. Tenants won't have the right to buy unless Government policy changes. If there are too few people living in a large property they will be asked to move. A housing scrutiny panel is looking for property to buy back.

Cllr Sevier reported that voids (empty properties) are turned around within two weeks. She confirmed that Fordingbridge residents don't necessarily have priority for Fordingbridge Council houses but that houses go to those whose need is greatest. Tenants must have a local connection though. NFDC will pay for a house renovation if the resident is disabled.

Cllrs Bellows and Sevier left the meeting.

9. To receive the following Committee meeting minutes and any recommendations to General Council contained therein.

- Planning Committee – 11th September 2019 – received Cllr Hale
- Amenities Committee – 18th September 2019 – received Cllr Mouland
- General Purposes Committee – 18th September 2019 – received Cllr Wilson
- Finance & Policy Committee – 25th September 2019 – received Cllr Adams

10. To consider the following requests from Fordingbridge Events Group for the Christmas Event

- **Use of the Town Council's Public Liability Insurance**

The Events Group have asked the Town Council if they could cover the Christmas Lights Switch On event under their insurance. In order for the Council's insurance to cover the event, then the event needs to be run by the council. Fordingbridge Events Group have agreed that the Council has final veto over any activities it deems unsafe. FEG don't have issue with veto but don't think it will be necessary as any risks will be identified at early stage and concerns addressed. Cllr Anstey does not support the running of this event as a council event.

No risk assessment has yet been submitted. Councillors expressed concern at the number of people who may attend the event.

Cllr Anstey reported that if the Christmas Lights Switch On is a Council event then the risk will sit with the Council. Two years ago Cllr Anstey and the Town Clerk were the two named organisers of the event, Cllr Anstey does not wish to take this on again. If an accident occurred as a result of the event not having been managed properly, then there could be an action against the Council.

Cllr Goldsmith asked why the Events Group didn't buy their own insurance. Cllr White explained it was about working together to benefit the town. A stand-alone insurance policy would cost the events group £1000, this money could instead be put towards the town's Christmas lights.

A vote was taken to allow the Fordingbridge Events Group to use the Town Council's Public Liability Insurance for the Christmas Lights Switch on event on 30th November. 8 in favour, 4 against. (Cllrs Anstey, Earth, Goldsmith and Jackson voted against.)

- **Use of the Recreation Ground car park for parking**

The Fordingbridge Events Group had requested use of the Recreation Ground car park for additional parking on the day of the Switch on Event. The car park would need to be taken as seen, it would be handed over on the morning and the Events Group would be responsible for marshalling it. This was agreed by the Council.

- **Use of lights and external power sockets at the Pavilion**

Councillors agreed to allow the Events Group the use of lights and external power sockets at the Pavilion for the event.

- **Use of Town Hall Office as a base for the event**

Councillors agreed to allow the Events Group to use the Town Hall office as a base for the event.

- **Organising and running a lunchtime tea and coffee event for the elderly in the Victoria Rooms**

Cllr Wilson reported that the Council had organised a tea party for the elderly in the Town Hall on the day of the 2017 Christmas Lights Switch On event. Approximately 50 people attended, Forres Sandle Manor choir performed and Father Christmas visited. The hall was already decorated for the evening event and Santa's Grotto set up in part of it.

This year the Council has been asked if they'd be willing to do something similar, but in the Victoria Rooms as the Town Hall is unavailable. (Santa's Grotto will be in Avonway this year.) Cllrs Wilson and Paton said they'd be willing to help but felt the event would be better held in the Town Hall on a different date due to difficulties with parking and wheelchair access at the Victoria Rooms.

Action: Cllr Wilson to liaise with Fordingbridge Events Group regarding venue and timings of tea party

The Clerk reported that Santa's Grotto is to run on consecutive Saturdays between 30th November and Christmas. The Fire Brigade plan to perform a rescue of Father Christmas from the Town Hall balcony on the 7th December.

11. To consider a response to the Safer New Forest Town and Parish Council's Survey, targeting crime and anti-social behaviour

The survey asks what is going well in your town and what (if any) are your concerns regarding crime and anti-social behaviour. If concerns have been outlined, what could be done to improve the area?

Action: Clerk to resend survey to Members of the Council and prepare response from their answers

12. Health and Safety

The Mayor reported that there had been two reported accidents at the Recreation ground in the children's play area and subsequent email correspondence with the grandfather of the two children involved in the accidents. The Mayor wished to state that the Council was sorry to hear that the two children had been involved in accidents. These accidents happened on two separate pieces of play equipment. Both apparatus were deemed by the recent RoSPA report to be low risk and neither item was faulty or damaged at the time of the accidents. The grandfather had concerns over the age and actual design of the equipment and has been invited to attend the next Amenities Committee meeting in November.

Action: No action required

The Clerk reported that a fourteen year old girl had climbed into a toddler swing and become stuck. The Groundsman called the fire brigade who were able to release her by taking the swing apart.

13. To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies and meetings attended

Cllrs Goldsmith, Mouland, Jackson, Wilson and White attended a meeting on 25th September with the Fordingbridge Greener Living Group about the proposed market. Cllr Wilson reported that the information had been sent to Hampshire Highways with a view to the market starting in April.

Cllr White attended the Fordingbridge Events Group meetings

Cllr Hale attended the Conservation Group AGM on 10th September

Cllr Jackson attended a Hythe and Dibden Council Neighbourhood Plan presentation at Reading University for 40 students. He found it very informative.

14. To note any items of correspondence

None.

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

Cllr Lewendon reported that some Council land at Whitsbury Road had been fenced off since the installation of a new sewerage pipe. The Clerk assured Cllr Lewendon that the fence was only there temporarily.

Cllr Lewendon was concerned that NHS services were being lost. He reported that his wife had been unable to make an appointment at the Doctor's Surgery for an eye infection as the surgery no longer deals with eyes. Instead she had been referred to SpecSavers in Ringwood where an eye health check costs £25. Rather than go to SpecSavers, she visited the pharmacy and paid for some eye drops instead. Cllr Lewendon said, that had a resident from a village with no one available to drive them, or someone on limited resources, had the same problem, they may not have been able to manage. General discussion amongst the Councillors about the lack of appointments followed.

Cllr Perkins reported that the hedges would be cut this week. Councillors asked that the grass verge alongside the Recreation Ground be mown.

16. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 6th November 2019 in the Town Hall

The meeting closed at 8.39p.m.