

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th December 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, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Mouland, Paton, Perkins & Wilson

In Attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Heron (HCC)
Cllr Sevier (NFDC)
A representative from the Salisbury Journal

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Goldsmith and White and from Cllr Bellows (NFDC).

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 6th
November 2019 and to report on any matters arising**

Agenda item 14 – Cllr Anstey asked that the following sentence from the minutes be changed to include the word 'draft':

The event management plan and the *draft* risk assessments had been distributed to Councillors.

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 6th November 2019, with the amendment as above, are signed as a true record.

No matters arising

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

Occurrences	November	Further Details
Anti-Social Behaviour	4	1 relating to a park gate being nailed shut various times, 1 of shot falling onto an industrial building, 1 of youths starting a fire under a building canopy and 1 relating to a neighbour dispute.
Violence against the person	4	1 relating to an incident in a school, 1 connected to 2 friends and 2 domestic incidents
Dwelling Burglary	0	
Burglary other than Dwelling	1	Shed entered and items taken from within
Business Burglary	1	2 Jerry cans of fuel stolen from a local school
Damage	0	
Theft	1	Fire extinguisher taken from public building
Theft from Motor Vehicles	8	A number of reported incidents relating to items being stolen from vans. These have all happened on the same night.
Suspicious Incidents	4	1 connected to the above ASB of youth starting a fire, 1 of a male knocking on a door and asking for work, 1 of a vehicle related to rural crime and 1 relating to children driving mini motorbikes on a highway.

Cllr Lewendon reported that the fire started under a building canopy was at the Sports Club at the Recreation Ground.

6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor attended the following:

7th November – Judging of the guys at Fordingbridge Junior School

8th November – Poppy band concert at the United Reformed Church

10th November – Remembrance Sunday parade and service. The Mayor thanked all those involved and reported that the event was a true credit to the town.

11th – Remembrance Service at Stuckton Road Cemetery

17th – Opening of the new Recycling Shed outside St Mary’s Church Hall. The Mayor thanked Wendy Reid and the Fordingbridge Greener Living Committee who had set this up, as well as other community activities to benefit the environment.

30th November – Tree planting in Recreation Ground

30th November – presented local hero award to Dave Tree, owner of All the Cool Stuff, who he said is an extremely worthy winner

30th November – Fordingbridge Christmas Event and Christmas lights switch on. The Mayor thanked everyone who had put the event together; it was a priceless occasion.

1st December – Verwood Mayor’s Christmas reception

4th December – Christmas tree and light installation wash up meeting

4th December – Funeral of former Councillor John Lovering

The Mayor raised concerns over the Councillors’ decision to run the Christmas Light Switch On as a Town council event, thereby using the Town Council’s insurance for the event. He reported that the Council’s insurance required additional costs and amendments in order to cover the evening. Cllr Anstey said that the vote (8 in favour, 4 against) should have been based on knowledge and understanding, rather than views and opinions. He asked if Councillors had read

the risk assessments to make an informed decision and noted the risk concern if there were insufficient marshals manning the road closures and volunteers potentially not attending a safety briefing. Councillors said they had read the draft risk assessments and event plan. Cllr Adams said there would be a wash up meeting in January and asked that it not be pre-judged.

7. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr Heron reported that the forward budgets are being considered again as is done in two year cycles. Another £80M needs to be taken out of the budget until 2021.

The lengthsman scheme costs Hampshire County Council half a million pounds each year and cannot continue as it is. Cllr Heron said that parishes may have to match funding from 2021.

Significant budget savings could be made in the library service. Cllr Heron reported that there are more libraries in Hampshire than in other areas. Fordingbridge has a very well used tier 2 library with a hardworking team of staff, however Cllr Heron stressed the need to continue to promote the library to ensure it remained well used.

Councillors asked Cllr Heron how, with the expected large increase in the population of Fordingbridge over the coming years, the new Local Plan would create employment opportunities.

Cllr Heron reported that the working age population is expected to decrease, not increase, across the district. Fordingbridge however is an anomaly and population is expected to increase. There is expected to be an increase in household formation but overall this isn't expected to translate into an actual population increase. An increase in one or two person households is expected, partly because older people are staying in their homes for longer. There is demand from younger people for two and three bedroom properties.

Cllr Heron reported that Part 1 of the Local Plan will consider the business needs and commercial property development report. There is no strategic allocation for new employment land. Additional employment will come about through the redevelopment of existing employment sites. There is also a shift in the way people work to consider.

Councillors asked if employment opportunities could be included in a Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Heron said it could be included in part 2 of a neighbourhood plan although Cllr Heron advised members to be selective. He emphasised the need to prioritise. He reminded Councillors that a Neighbourhood Plan couldn't go against the higher Local Plan as it wouldn't be approved. The new corporate plan is being finalised at District Council level and this will address employment.

Cllr Jackson queried where the existing sites are that will be redeveloped. He thought more sites were needed. Cllr Sevier said there were sites at Green Lane and at Arch Farm on Whitsbury Road, however the Town Councillors thought little redevelopment could take place there.

Cllr Heron said there is a change in how people work today and what they expect. At Hampshire County Council 40% of the staff now homework. Although the workforce is large, the infrastructure to support that workforce is smaller.

Cllr Heron advised the Council that if they wanted to allocate more employment land then they must provide evidence for doing so. Contact the businesses and ask them or perhaps conduct a survey.

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Written questions were sent to Cllrs Sevier and Bellows in advance of the meeting.

- Cllr Sevier previously mentioned the long waiting list for Council housing (14 years) – how many Fordingbridge residents are on that waiting list please?
 - a. At the beginning of the year there were twelve thousand people on the list. The housing allocation system has recently been changed and people have had to re-register. Registration is due to close in January and after that everyone will need to be processed. Cllr Bellows will then be able to provide a figure.
- Sunny Side Farm, planning application 19/10713 – did the applicant discharge the conditions and if so when?
 - a. Cllr Sevier reported that this application was now being dealt with by the legal department. Cllr Wilson said that one of the conditions was that the building work is done within three years. Planning permission was granted in 2007, there was no stable block on the land in 2015 and Cllr Wilson thought that planning permission should be reapplied for. She reported that people were living in the stable block.
- 46 whitsbury Road, planning application 18/11467 – did the applicant discharge the conditions and if so when?
 - a) Cllr Sevier said there were ten planning conditions attached to that site and she didn't know which was being raised. Cllr Heron said that although NFDC is aware of an issue regarding that site, no information has been passed on from the Town Council to NFDC. Cllr Wilson said there have been emails sent.

Action: Cllr Wilson to email evidence

Cllrs Sevier and Heron left the meeting.

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

- Planning Committee – 13th November 2019 – received Cllr Hale
- Extraordinary Finance & Policy Committee – 13th November 2019 – received Cllr Adams
- Amenities Committee – 20th November 2019 – received Cllr Moulard
- General Purposes Committee 20th November 2019 – received Cllr Earth
- Finance & Policy Committee – 27th November 2019 – received Cllr Adams

10. To receive a recommendation from the Finance & Policy Committee on the precept for 2020-2021

Councillors considered the following budget proposals for the 2020/2021 financial year

- Amenities Committee £79,350 (Income £19,150, Expenditure £98,500)
- General Purposes Committee £40,647 (Income £51,328, Expenditure £91,975)
- Finance and Policy Committee £134,325 (Income £8,875, Expenditure £143,200)

giving a total precept request of **£254322**.

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: to agree the proposed budgets of the Amenities, General Purposes and Finance and Policy Committees and agree the precept request of **£254322**, an increase of 10.13%, as recommended by the Finance and Policy Committee. All in favour.

11. To report on any Health & Safety issues

No issues to report.

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

Cllr Jackson met with the Clerk of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council to discuss the formation of a neighbourhood plan

Cllr Hale attended a meeting of the Fordingbridge Conservation Group on 26th November. He reported that the group had few members. The group hoped to find ways to link in with the new green initiatives taking place in Fordingbridge

Cllr Wilson attended a coffee morning at Homebridge House Retirement Home and has been given a list of concerns from residents.

Cllr Paton attended a meeting of the Fairtrade group and reported that it is progressing well. She stressed the need to encourage Fordingbridge Town Council to buy Fairtrade products. The Asst Clerk reported that Fairtrade tea and biscuits can be found in the staff kitchen and Fairtrade wine was bought for the Allotment AGM recently. Cllr Paton reported that the Gourment Grocer and Carl Hillwood Hairdressers are keen to be involved. She said there is a need to get more information out to encourage businesses in the town.

Cllrs Earth, Jackson, Lewendon and White attended a meeting at the Doctors' Surgery. Cllr Lewendon reported that a patient wishing to book an appointment at the surgery could be referred to Ringwood, Lymington or elsewhere. He said that the initiative of linking facilities together came from Central Government due to community budgeting and provision, however he felt it doesn't work in this area as the distances are too great and the public transport provision is not there.

Cllr Lewendon reported that the surgery practice manager has asked for regular communication between the surgery and the Council. Also that there is a new telephone system in place which tells patients where they are in the queue and no longer drops calls. With regards to Cllr Lewendon's wife being asked to pay £25 for an eye health check, this was a mistake after a recent signing of a new contract.

Cllr Jackson reported there was an accommodation problem at the surgery and more space would be appreciated. He mentioned the neighbourhood plan and how it could allocate sites for development.

Many Councillors also attended the funeral of former Councillor John Lovering on 4th December and Remembrance Sunday commemorations.

13. To note any items of correspondence

Burgate school thanked the Council for the cheque and certificate for the Town Council Award for Community Service. The school is certain it will be gratefully received by the student.

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

A Festive Afternoon Tea with the Town Council is planned for Friday 6th December from 1.30pm until 3.30pm at the Town Hall as part of the Christmas in Fordingbridge events. Retired members of the community have been invited. A pianist has been booked to play for the afternoon tea.

Cllr Lewendon asked that the lengthsman scrape the pavement at the new development on Whitsbury Road as it is covered in mud. The Asst Clerk reported that he would next be working in Fordingbridge on 7th February 2020.

The Clerk reported that the first meeting of the neighbourhood plan steering group was held today. Also today was the Christmas tree and light installation wash up meeting with a view to starting the tender process for next year's Christmas lights. Cllr Perkins reported that he thought the town's Christmas lights look outdated and old-fashioned. Cllr Anstey said that a lot of people in the town give many hours of their own time and even go out of pocket to display the lights. The true cost of the lights isn't clearly summed up in what the Council pays.

15. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 8th January 2020 in the Town Hall

The meeting closed at 8.42p.m.