

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16th September 2020 at 8:15pm

held remotely using appropriate technology in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crimes Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) which came into force on 4th April 2020.

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

Present: Cllr Moulard – Chairman
Cllrs Anstey, Paton, Perkins & White

In Attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Cllr Adams (Public Gallery)

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hale and Wilson.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

No declarations were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2020 and report any matters arising

Cllr Anstey proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2020 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising

Agenda item 5 – The Clerk reported that he met with the Buildings’ Manager about the paddling pool in the Recreation Ground. A decision has been made to do the work next Spring with the aim to reopen the pool in summer 2021. The Buildings’ Manager has been asked to consider pricings and potential contractors with a view to repairing the existing pool to include laying a proper base, cleaning of slate, lifting the tiles and relaying them and rendering the pool. The Clerk has asked the Buildings’ Manager to consider other options such as coloured resin instead of tiles, or a redesign of the size and shape of the pool, and to come up with suggestions.

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

Cllr Moulard has been asked by a local resident if a tree could be planted in the Recreation Ground in memory of his late wife. Councillors supported the use of the Recreation Ground for people wishing to plant trees in memoriam. Cllr Anstey said that consideration should be given to the areas and sites we make available for this purpose and recommended reserving a plot of land where these trees would be planted.

5. Matters relating to the Recreation Ground

- **Hire – to review use of pitches and hire rates to support recovery of the clubs following lifting of pandemic restrictions**

The Clerk reported that he asked the Turks Football Club for a proposal regarding the use of pitches at Recreation Ground and is still awaiting this. The official charge for Juniors and Training is £28 per session although in the past an agreement has been reached for a block booking fee for summer training use. Turks are not currently charging their juniors for training, to encourage their return after the coronavirus lockdown. This has been effective; the football club used the pitches on average six days a week during August, compared to two or three days a week in previous years. The Clerk reported that the Turks have only

recently requested fees from members of 50% now and 50% by January as a number of members are struggling financially.

The Clerk reported that he has asked the buildings manager for the final documentation for the Pavilion tender process. He expects the tender to be posted on Contracts Finder this Friday with the view to beginning work in early November. The asbestos survey has been received and whilst it shows there is asbestos in most rooms, this is all low risk.

With regards to other matters at the Recreation Ground, the Clerk reported that

- The topsoil to repair the unclear and sunken lines on the football pitch arrived earlier this week and Groundsman has so far put down topsoil and seed for half of the football pitch near the Pavilion.
- The replacement Churches Together tree has been snapped in half and can't be saved.
- The replacement post for the lifebuoy casing has arrived.
- The plans for the kiosk toilets have been received from the architect and sent to the Buildings' Manager who has a plan to connect a drain from each of the respective toilets to the foul drainage sewer. This will make the cleaning a much better process. The Clerk advised pushing ahead with this as a number of complaints have been received about the cleanliness of the toilets over the summer.
- The Clerk is awaiting a date for the Skate Park lights work to commence.
- All four panels of the newer Youth Shelter need replacing at a cost of approximately £1000 each. To remove the old shelters and supply and install a new shelter would cost approximately £8000. The Clerk is seeking quotes to remove the remaining Perspex panels on the newer shelter and replace with punched sheet metal panels, which he hoped would be more robust than the Perspex panels, and to remove the older shelter.
- The Clerk will ask for a quote for a second height restriction barrier for the Recreation Ground gate near the Memorial Bungalow.
- The Clerk will ask for a quote to repair the damaged Skate Park railings.
- A request has been received from a naturalist, conservationist and angler asking that Fordingbridge Town Council considers erecting warning signs at the upper and lower boundaries of the Recreation Ground's river bank. The correspondent reported that boating traffic which continues along the River Avon beyond the Recreation Ground, is potentially trespassing and causing damage to wildlife such as spawning fish, nesting birds and otters.

Cllr White said he thought the external appearance of the Recreation Ground shocking; the hedges overgrown and the verges horrible. Councillors agreed this entrance to the town doesn't give a good first impression of Fordingbridge. Cllr White asked that the Groundsman gains the qualification necessary for working next to the road. The Clerk reported that an external contractor is booked to cut the hedge later this month. Cllr White thought that it would save money and time waiting if the Groundsman had the necessary licences.

Action: Clerk to investigate

Cllr White queried why the Groundsmen couldn't take down the old panels rather than paying someone else to do this work. The Clerk reported that the Perspex screens are attached by vandal proof bolts which the Groundsmen can't undo, although they have cut off as much as they can. The Clerk suggested a back to back bench, looking out over the river in one direction and the playing fields in another, would be a good replacement for the old shelter and would save having to dig out the concrete base.

Cllr Anstey reported that it would be incorrect of the Council to put signs on the riverbank warning of trespassing if venturing further along the river by boat. He reported that the Town

Council owns the riverbank and the ground at the Rec, but not the water. Cllr Adams concurred from the Public Gallery, saying that the navigation rights from Christchurch to Salisbury never been rescinded. Councillors agreed that it is not illegal to travel along the river and the Council should not put up trespassing signs but that signs warning to be mindful of wildlife could perhaps be put up by conservation groups instead. The Clerk reported that some wildlife signs are already in place at the Recreation Ground.

Cllr White was concerned that an increasing number of holiday makers were jumping from the bridge into the River Avon. He reported that although the last fatality was over fifteen years ago, this activity is still dangerous as the river is shallow. Cllr White asked if warning signs about the dangers of jumping off the bridge could be put up at the Recreation Ground or on the bridge itself.

Action: Clerk to investigate

Cllr Anstey reported that a concrete post next to the height restrictive barrier at the Recreation Ground needs removing as it narrows the right hand turning circle by 18 inches, making it difficult for emergency vehicles to access the sports fields directly. Although an ambulance recently accessed the sports fields via the car park, this isn't ideal due to the uneven surface of the car park and the fact that parked cars could block access another time.

Action: Clerk to arrange for post to be removed

Cllr Anstey reported that a net spreader on the football goal posts was damaged and was concerned that this would compromise the structural integrity of the goal posts.

Cllr Moulard reported that the Town Council has been approached by a cycle company wanting to begin a cycling event from the Recreation Ground in May 2021. Parking for 500 cars would be needed, however if this is too many then the company would like to use Fordingbridge as a drinks stop instead. Councillors thought a drinks stop would be better than an event start. Cllr Anstey said that while he welcomes use of the Recreation Ground that puts Fordingbridge on the map he raised concerns over cyclists exiting the Rec onto the A338 slip road. He also mentioned the public use of the Rec car park during this time. Cllr Perkins urged caution due to public ill-feeling towards large cycle events in the past.

6. To report any matters concerning Open Spaces

- Jobs for Lengthsman –2nd October 2020

Cllr Moulard reported that since lockdown he has walked many of the footpaths around Fordingbridge and found them to be in good condition. Councillors agreed to email the Clerk if they had any jobs for the lengthsman.

The Clerk reported that the open spaces survey has gone to residents although not everyone has received it yet due to problems with the delivery company. The Information Office staff are collating the responses and a report will be sent to members in due course.

Cllr Anstey said he'd like to move the fence in the Recreation Ground so that the riverside picnic area is no longer part of the children's play area. This would make the play area smaller and more secure, without the direct river access. It would also allow people to take their dogs to the riverside, where dogs currently aren't allowed due to it being part of the play area. He hoped that this area could be landscaped and the paddling pool size and shape changed to fit with that. Cllr Anstey reported that due to Covid-19, more families will be looking for UK based sites to visit next summer, so now is an ideal time to do this work.

7. To note any items of correspondence

No items of correspondence.

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

Cllr Perkins reported that the retired Groundsman used to spray the weeds on the High Street and asked if our Groundsmen could do the same. The Clerk replied that NFDC are currently spraying the weeds in the High Street and due to regulations only a specific weedkiller can now be used.

9. To note the date of the next meeting as 18th November 2020

The meeting closed at 9:00 pm