

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 27th November 2019 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

Present: Cllr Adams – Chair;
Cllrs Earth, Hale, Jackson, Mouland, Paton & Wilson

In attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer (RFO)

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Anstey, Goldsmith, Lewendon, Perkins & White

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Cllr 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.

Cllr Hale declared an interest in item no. 6 To consider grant applications under Section 137 and would leave the room.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2019 and report any matters arising

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Mouland and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd October 2019 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising: Agenda point 13 – The Town Council has not yet heard from the owner of the land adjacent to the Recreation Ground

Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 13th November 2019 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising: Agenda point 4 – Cllr Jackson is drafting a website template and there is a first meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group on 4th December 2019.

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

No matters raised.

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

The RFO highlighted the receipt of CIL funds of £73,792 (taking the total amount of CIL funds received to £191k) and the second half of the SLA payment for the Information Office of £6,375. The RFO noted the non-regular expenditure items and advised a further bill had been received since preparing the finance report for the servicing of the pump at the Pavilion. The service identified work that needs to be undertaken and the RFO said she would check with the Buildings Manager to see if the work on the pump would impact on the proposed refurbishment of the Pavilion. The RFO also noted the following expenses: £240 for trees, election expenses of £3.7k (less than the budgeted £5k), the Office 365 licence fee payable for the period to March and the final Town Hall works bill of £2,690 to pay to K&B Builders (There was still £9.8k of the contingency that had not been used for the works). The RFO had sent out reminders for the hanging baskets to Bubbles, Dignity and the George. Cllr Jackson queried the cap on CIL of £90 per dwelling and asked whether it applied per development or was cumulative over a given period.

Action: RFO to clarify the cap on CIL payments

Cllr Jackson raised the matter of signatories on the bank account. The RFO advised that Cllr Jackson was a signatory but the bank had not sent through all the information required to authorise online payments.

Action: RFO to chase the bank

The RFO reported that she still expects the Town Council to be £30k overspent this year, funds need to be allocated from CIL or reserves to cover the Town Hall building work and she is still working on the making tax digital software transition.

The dishwasher is broken and will cost £400 to repair – If the Council decide not to repair it the contractor will not charge for the call out if they can use the dishwasher for spare parts. Cllrs discussed the current use of the dishwasher, how that use could be increased by increasing the use of the Town Hall and whether the caretaker could regularly set the dishwasher to prevent future break downs. Cllrs also discussed the equipment in the kitchen and whether it was adequate for bookings.

Action: Town Clerk to send out inventory of kitchen equipment

Cllr Mouland proposed that the dishwasher should be repaired and the Town Council should then review the use of the kitchen. Cllr Paton suggested, once repaired, that the dishwasher should be run once a week. Cllrs Hale, Earth and Paton suggested that the repair should be delayed until the new year.

The RFO told Cllrs that the football club had offered £1,500 plus the charge for matches for its use of the Recreation Ground pitches and facilities. The RFO's recommendation is that this offer should be accepted. The football club had advised that 90% of its members were from Fordingbridge and had requested a meeting with the Council to discuss its use of the Recreation Ground going forward. Cllr Jackson asked about the youth sections use of the pitches throughout the year. The RFO advised that the club used Burgate School pitches over the Winter months and used the Recreation Ground over the Summer when facilities were unavailable at the school. The Cllrs were happy to accept the football clubs proposal.

The RFO referred to the Burgate School Community award and had made the councils apologies re attendance but would issue a payment of £50 for the award.

The RFO advised that STN were being required to do additional work and incur additional costs over and above the contract sum in preparation for the Christmas Lights event. Ian Newman has now provided a cheque to meet some of these additional costs. A wash up meeting post the Christmas Lights event to address the issues of control of costs and lights in the future has been arranged for the 4th December 2019. Cllrs discussed the additional costs and how these were incurred. The RFO advised that the additional cost to the Council for insurance for the event was £371 plus Insurance Premium Tax. Cllr Wilson raised the issue of a pop-up beer tent at the Christmas event. The Clerk advised that he had reported to Zurich that a stall selling alcohol was planned. Cllrs discussed the sale of alcohol at the event and whether the stalls were operated by local residents. The RFO advised Cllrs that between the Council officers there would be attendance at the event for its duration.

6. To consider grant applications under Section 137

- Fordingbridge & District Day Centre for the Frail & Housebound

[Cllr Hale left the room]

Cllrs discussed the amount given by the Town Council in the previous year and the request for £400 this year. The RFO summarised the finances of the organisation. Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Mouland and therefore RESOLVED: to grant £400 to the Fordingbridge & District Day Centre for the Frail and Housebound. All in favour.

[Cllr Hale returned to the room]

7. To receive any Finance & Policy matters referred from sub-committees:

There were no matters referred from sub-committees.

8. To receive a report on the Pavilion Refurbishment

The Clerk advised that he had spoken to the NFDC regarding the timing of a planning application for a proposed refurbishment of the Pavilion given the time constraints to use the allocated s106 funds. The NFDC had advised that the preference would be for pre-application advice to be sought and so long as the NFDC is comfortable that the Town Council is going through the planning process prior to the end of the financial year then the s106 funding would not be withdrawn.

9. To receive and discuss a recommendation from Amenities for budget proposals for 2020/21

The Amenities Committee recommended a budget proposal of £79,350 to be funded from the precept. This combined with the recommendation from the General Purposes Committee and the

proposed budget of the Finance & Policy Committee would result in a budgeted precept of £254,322, an increase of 10% on the current year's budget. The RFO advised that the precept has to be submitted to the NFDC during January. The budget recommendations from the Finance & Policy Committee would therefore need to be submitted to General Council for approval at either December's or January's General Council meeting. The RFO explained that the increase was due principally to staff costs and in particular the increased pension contribution required. Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore RESOLVED to accept the proposed Amenities budget and recommend it to General Council. All in favour.

10. To receive and discuss a recommendation from General Purposes for budget proposals for 2020/21

The General Purposes Committee recommended a budget proposal of £40,647 to be funded from the precept. This combined with the recommendation from the General Purposes Committee and the proposed budget of the Finance & Policy Committee would result in a budgeted precept of £254,322, an increase of 10% on the current year's budget. Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore RESOLVED to accept the proposed General Purposes budget and recommend it to General Council. All in favour

11. To consider the budget proposals for the Finance & Policy Committee for 2020/21

Cllrs considered the proposed budget prepared by the RFO which required £134,325 to be funded from the precept. This combined with the recommendation from the General Purposes Committee and the proposed budget of the Amenities Committee would result in a budgeted precept of £254,322, an increase of 10% on the current year's budget. Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore RESOLVED to accept the proposed Finance & Policy Committee budget and recommend it to General Council. All in favour.

12. To formulate a resolution to go before General Council on 8th January 2020 for the precept request

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED:** to accept the following budget proposals & precept requests. All in favour:

Amenities Budget Proposal - income £19,150, expenditure £98,500; precept request £79,350

General Purposes Budget Proposal - income £51,328, expenditure £91,975; precept request £40,647

Finance & Policy budget proposals for income £8,875, expenditure £143,200; precept request of £134,325

Total Precept Request for the year 2020/20/21: £254,322 (10.13% increase)

13. To confirm the continued appointment of the Internal Auditor (IAC)

Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore RESOLVED: to confirm the continued appointment of the Internal Auditor (IAC). All in favour.

14. To approve the following policies

- Tree works

The RFO advised that the Tree works policy had been based upon the policy of the NFDC. Cllrs discussed the detail of the policy and considered its fairness when dealing with individual cases. Cllrs also discussed the tree inspection policy currently adopted in conjunction with the NFDC. Cllrs also noted that if the policy was adopted it could be varied if deemed necessary. Cllrs resolved to adopt the Tree Works policy.

- Social Media

Cllrs considered the draft Social Media Policy. The RFO advised that the policy required the Town Council to nominate an individual to monitor and moderate social media content. Cllrs agreed to adopt the policy and that the Assistant Clerk should monitor social media content and the Clerk should be the nominated person with responsibility for social media content in accordance with the Social Media policy.

15. To note any items of correspondence.

No items of correspondence

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

The Clerk noted the funeral of the former Cllr John Lovering and asked whether the Town Council wished to purchase a wreath or make a contribution to funeral costs. Cllrs considered this and resolved to make a contribution of £100 towards the cost of the funeral.

Cllr Wilson reminded Cllrs to submit an questions or comments for District and County Councillors in advance of the next General Council meeting.

Cllr Paton commented on the condition walking along the pavement along Salisbury Road.

Action: Town Clerk to send hedge letters if appropriate

Cllr Jackson raised a query regarding the running of the Town Council and whether it could be restructured to operate more efficiently whilst still operating within the statutory framework. Cllrs discussed the potential to restructure the operation of the Town Council. The RFO had looked at this last year and it had been considered by Cllrs. Cllrs suggested that the views of the officers should be considered and then a proposal could be put to the Council for consideration. Cllrs also discussed the minuting of meetings and whether minutes could purely be a record of decisions and action points or whether there was a need for more information to provide context to the decisions made.

17. To note the date of the next meeting as 29th January 2020

The meeting closed at 8:59 pm