

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 6th October 2021 at 7.30pm
in the Town Hall**

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

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

In Attendance: Mr Paul Goddard, Town Clerk
A reporter from the Salisbury Journal

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr White and Cllr Heron (HCC).

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 1st
September 2021 and to report on any matters arising**

Cllr Goldsmith proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 1st September 2021 are signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising: Cllr Jackson commented that he was still awaiting news of available resource at HCC from Graham Wright.

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

None

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

No beat report had been received but PCSO May advised he would bring them completely up to date as part of his handover to PCSO Priestland.

6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

Cllr Hale reported that on Monday 27th September he attended the **Avonway AGM** in the evening. The Avonway Trustees reported they had been able to replace the entrance doors and roof coverings during the last year, mostly funded by grants, including from NFDC and Fordingbridge Town Council. They also reported Avonway had balanced income and expenditure during the last year, again mostly by using grants from NFDC and by furloughing staff. The Treasurer said the situation was more uncertain in the future as the grants had finished but not all users are returning. Unless income increases, it may be necessary to increase charges to other users. The Chairman expressed concern that Avonway currently only has four Trustees and two of them intend to stand down in May 2022. They are working to recruit new Trustees and other helpers and were giving out invitations at the meeting. There have even been discussions about what will happen if there are no Trustees willing to manage Avonway in the future.

Cllr Hale advised that on Tuesday 28th September he attended the **Fordingbridge Conservation Group AGM** in the evening. The Vice Chairman reported that wildlife is generally increasing at Bishops Pond, both with plants and insects. The Group have created some small permanent areas of water to enable insects to survive the summer and are now considering inserting a pond liner in a section of the pond to create some larger permanent water. The Group had a successful Open Day on 18th September and hope some of the visitors will come back to help with the work. The Group expressed sadness that the founder and Chairman of the Group, Graham Long, had died since the last AGM. As with Avonway, there was concern about lack of new members and discussion about how this can be changed.

7. To receive a report from the County Councillor

No report received.

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

No report received. Cllr Wilson said that the Town Council always had to chase the NFDC for updates and commented it seemed the NFDC was run by its officers, not its elected members. She raised concerns regarding benches at Sweatford Water Meadows, the area behind the Co-Op and Sequoia Farm. She had submitted a freedom of information request to the NFDC regarding CIL spending and had received a response in March that it was under review. She questioned whether the situation had changed. She said the NFDC needed to show more commitment and consult with the Town Council in relation to existing and new infrastructure projects. She raised concerns regarding HCC's maintenance of the town's roads and commented that potholes were poorly repaired and are now in need of further work. She suggested that this should be raised with the County Councillor. Cllrs discussed the concerns raised by Cllr Wilson. Cllr Wilson said the developers at Augustus Park were due to handover the SANG, play area and commuted sums before the development was 90% occupied. Cllr Lewendon confirmed that the play area at Augustus Park was now open. Cllr Wilson said there was no framework regarding the handling of money passed to the NFDC by developers. Cllr Paton said that if the Town Council wanted to influence how those funds were used then it should not delay in submitting proposals to the NFDC. In relation to traffic concerns, Cllr Jackson noted the recent HCC report which detailed the funding constraints by HCC in relation to managing the road network. Cllrs discussed the lack of improvement to road surfaces and also discussed the working hours of the current contractors working on Salisbury Street, how early each day they were finishing work and the impact on traders and bus users.

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

- Finance and Policy Committee – 25th August 2021 – received Cllr Adams
- Planning Committee – 8th September 2021 – received Cllr Paton
- Amenities Committee – 15th September 2021 – received Cllr Moulard
- General Purposes Committee – 15th September 2021 – received Cllr Wilson
- Finance and Policy Committee – 29th September 2021 – received Cllr Adams

10. To consider a Christmas Lights 2021 event

The planning working group had met today and were looking at a low-key Christmas Lights switch on in the last week of November and afternoon tea at the Town Hall on a Friday in December. The working party would liaise with Revd Philbrick, Ian Newman and the Events Group committee.

11. To agree the dates of the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2022

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: to accept the proposed dates of the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2022.

12. To consider Highways and Footways in Fordingbridge

Cllr Wilson advised that there was a legal agreement with the developer of Augustus Park to improve the footpath at the front of the site and queried how good the agreement was and whether it was still binding. Cllr Paton noted that the developer was due to remove all equipment from the site by the end of November so if any work was required to be done then it needed to be done before the equipment was removed. The Town Clerk advised that the head of planning at the NFDC had (during an open spaces site visit) agreed to review and report back in relation to the developer's obligations under the agreement.

Cllr Hale had been contacted by a resident expressing concerns regarding the junction of Victoria Road out on to Station Road, which the resident felt was dangerous. Cllrs discussed the junction and the speed limit on Station Road. Cllr Jackson said he felt the junction was self-regulating as if a car was waiting to turn into the junction it slows the traffic. Cllrs also discussed the traffic calming measures in Rockbourne that are part funded by the parish council and have taken some time to be agreed.

Cllr Hale raised the survey and said that there were some concerns raised about closing the car park entrance at Roundhill and the impact on traffic in other areas of town. He said the results of the survey would lend weight to concerns raised with NFDC. Cllr Jackson advised that there had been 36 survey responses to date. Cllr Paton said that the survey should be widely advertised. Cllr Lewendon commented on the map at Augustus Park and inaccuracies in terms of walking, cycle and bus routes. Cllr Wilson commented on £40k being spent on Sweatford Water Meadows under the NFDC's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the placement of benches.

13. To report on any Health & Safety issues

Cllr Paton advised that there was currently no gate between West Mills and Flaxfelds and commented on the general poor condition of the area. Cllrs discussed who was responsible for the upkeep of this area. Cllr Moulard raised the new fence at the car park at the Recreation Ground and said there was now no ambulance access at the gate by the road. The Clerk advised that ambulance access to the playing fields was available at the gate by the Recreation Ground bungalow.

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

Cllr Paton raised the proposed bench for the founder of the Twinning Association at the Recreation Ground and advised that it was the 40th anniversary of the association which was going to be marked on 4th July next year. She suggested that the mayor wish to attend this event in Vimoutiers. The event also involves representatives from a German town (whose attendance was being funded by Vimoutiers). Cllrs briefly discussed an appropriate gift.

Cllr Anstey had attended a NALC course in relation to the future of High Streets and Town centres, which he would recommend. The course highlighted the importance of footfall for town centres, safety issues such as traffic and climate change issues such as the planting of trees.

Cllr Wilson advised that the community composter was now at full capacity and about to produce its first lot of compost. There are eighty members of the compost club. Cllr Paton said the school was interested in purchasing their own composter. Cllr Wilson advised that they cost £5k.

15. To note any items of correspondence

A member of the public has asked if the skate park lights could stay on until 10pm rather than turning off at 8pm. Cllrs discussed this request and agreed that the lights should be left on until 9pm.

Cllrs discussed the cricket honours boards which had been at the Pavilion. Cllr Wilson said she would establish whether the museum could store them.

The Clerk noted a letter of thanks in relation to the Town Council giving lifetime fishing rights at the Recreation Ground to a local fisherman.

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

No report.

17. To note the date of the next meeting as the Annual Council Meeting on Wednesday 3rd November 2021 at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 8:23 p.m.