

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Wednesday, 18th April 2012 in the Town Hall, Fordingbridge

Present:

Cllr. Connolly (Town Mayor)

Councillors Adams, Anstey, Lewendon, Perkins, Shering, (A) Wilson & (G) Wilson

In attendance:

HCC Cllr. Edward Heron

NFDC Cllr Roxy Bellows

NFDC Cllr Ann Sevier

Mr D Yates, Chief Executive, New Forest District Council (Speaker)

Ms K. Mason, Town Clerk

Mrs D. Vine, Asst Clerk.

Mrs D Gordon, Finance Officer

15 members of the public

1. To receive apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Price and Cllr Hale.

2. To welcome the speaker, Mr Dave Yates, Chief Executive, New Forest District Council

Mr Yates addressed the meeting on the Localism Bill 2011 and it's implications for New Forest District and local parish & town councils.

The bill will give eligible councils the opportunity to adopt the General power of competence which will mean Councils will no longer require legislation to carry out certain powers and duties. This will give parish and town councils greater freedom in what they are able to do in the community.

The bill also contains changes to the standards regime required by those who hold office and a new code of conduct reflecting this must be adopted by all councils.

There are also be rights for those in the community to challenge decisions, call referendums, take over services and ensure community facilities aren't lost.

Changes to housing legalisation include that no council tenancies are for life, changes to the housing register, money paid by tenants now being given to individual councils to buy back housing stock.

The National Planning framework has been reduced and regional plans will go. Parish & Town Councils can make neighbourhood plans to give them greater control.

Finance is hardly mentioned in the Act but central government have advised there will be a constrained financial regime (although possibly a greater freedom over business rates).

The Mayor then gave those attending an opportunity to ask questions.

The Mayor thanked Dave Yates for attending the Annual Town Assembly.

3. To confirm the minutes of the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly on 24th March 2011 and to report any matters arising.

It was proposed by Cllr Lewendon and seconded by Cllr Perkins that the minutes of the Annual Parish Assembly held on 24th March 2011 be signed as a true record. All in favour, Carried.

There were no matters arising

4. To report on Finance for 2011/12 (un-audited accounts) and the budget for 29012/13

Deborah Gordon, Finance Officer, presented the un-audited accounts and invited those in attendance to view them at the end of the meeting.

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

The Diamond Jubilee is to be celebrated by a large 'Picnic in the Park' event at the Recreation Ground on Saturday June 2nd. Information will be available on the Town Council website and posters.

There are still problems with skateboarders and cyclists using the pavements in Bridge Street which is causing problems for pedestrians. The police have been informed.

Counterfeit £20 notes and £1 coins are in circulation. The police have asked the public to be aware.

6. To receive any other relevant parish business

Footpaths

Ruth Croker, Town Council Footpath Officer, discussed three footpaths:

Avon Valley footpath – this is now 20 years old. There is still a major problem on the footpath beyond St Mary's Church which has been severely undermined by badger sets. There are large holes and tree roots have been exposed. It is officially closed at the moment and Natural England have been consulted as to how to resolve the situation. There is a temporary route for the Avon Valley footpath, avoiding the badger activity, via Frog Lane.

Breamore Railway Line – the work is almost completed on the footpath from Burgate to South Charford. There will be a gate by the bus stop on the A338 at Burgate. The official opening will be later in the year and it is hoped to link it with other footpaths.

Fordingbridge Junior School – it is hoped to improve the path currently used by schoolchildren and the school is liaising with Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Connolly thanked Ms Croker for her work as footpath officer.

There was no other parish business.

The Mayor, Cllr Connolly thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.00 p.m.