

## **FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held at 7.30pm on Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 in the Town Hall, Fordingbridge**

#### **Present:**

Cllr. Connolly (Town Mayor)  
Councillors Fulford, Hale, Lewendon, Perkins, Price, Earth, Paton, (A) Wilson & (G) Wilson

#### **In attendance:**

HCC Cllr. E Heron  
NFDC Cllrs R Bellows & A Sevier  
Mrs H Richards, Town Clerk  
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer  
Ian Newman, Guest Speaker  
13 members of the public

#### **1. To receive apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Anstey & Adams.

#### **2. To confirm the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 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 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2014 be signed as a true record. All in favour, Carried.

#### **Matters arising**

Minute no. 2 – Guided Walks - Although Mike Buchanan was no longer a Member of the Council, it was hoped that this project will be re-visited in the future.

#### **3. To receive the Annual Report from the Town Mayor**

The Mayor, Cllr Malcolm Connolly reported on the activities over the past year.

I would like to give thanks to the 3 local Councillors; Hampshire County Councillor Edward Heron and New Forest District Councillors Ann Sevier and Roxy Bellows for their support and attendance at meetings.

I would also like to thank the staff of the Town Council, namely Helen, Debbie, Martine, Sue, Kathy, Val, Ann, Derek & Andy. The Rotary Club, Helen Tague, Karl & Sue Jung and Ian Newman are all also given thanks for their support throughout the Town.

I would advise of the success of the Kiosk now running at the Memorial Gardens and the hope that this will continue when the new enhancement works to the play area are carried out later in the year.

With regards to problems experienced in the town over the past year, traffic remains as a constant complaint, including that the new constraints are not working. I would reiterate that it is still early days and the success of the various schemes will be reviewed in the Autumn. There is a feeling that the provision of yellow lines is a waste of time without enforcement to back it up but hopefully after the election this may be addressed.

This year has seen changes to the Policing in Fordingbridge with the Police Station closing and a new Police Office opening in Provost Street which is not open to the public. There has been a marked reduction in police presence in the town and resources unfortunately have result in the Police not attending the monthly General Council meeting or the Police Liaison meetings – I can report that this is an ongoing discussion with Inspector Rachel Stokes.

Over the coming year, the Council plans to continue with plans at the Recreation Ground with funding for the new Sports Pavilion being sought and the provision of a hardstanding (bandstand) within the Memorial Gardens near to the Kiosk. The Recreation Ground is a Sport and Social area and be developed for different users.

Out of the Town Centre, problems continue to be experienced on land at Puddleslosh/Marl Lane with many Planning issues. It is important to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan to protect community land and amenity space. Local Councillors have worked very hard but can do no more to resolve the issues.

The Council is a small Council, which can cause frustrations. I would like the Clerk to undertake the CILCA qualification to enable the Power of Competence to be gained – this would offer more opportunity for the Council to provide more services of it's own.

I would like to raise awareness of local clubs, groups and organisations who are lacking in volunteers – this could possibly involve an event in the Town Hall.

Finally I would like to say how grateful I am to the Council's Members for the time and effort involved in being a member.

#### **4. To report on finances for 2014/15 (un-audited accounts) and the budget for 2015/16**

The Finance Officer summarised her report for the past year, including the transfer of £30,000 underspend to reserves. There has been no increase in the precept for this year. The Finance Officer reported that S106 Developer Contributions had been allocated including the re-allocation of previously allocated funds for the MUGA, transferred to the new Sports pavilion project. Money is available for the Play Area enhancement and this was being progressed for works to be carried out later in the year.

The Chairman explained what the MUGA is – Multi Use Games Area – and what it is hoped that it's provision will achieve; which is more recreational activities available to a wider group of users which would encourage new users to the recreation ground. It is also hoped that this may lead to new groups/clubs being formed. More Clubs and users of facilities at the Recreation Ground will increase the possibility of obtaining grant funding towards further projects.

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

No matters were raised directly by Members of the Public in attendance, however Cllr G Wilson advised that a member of the public had recently had a handbag snatched outside of Tesco in Salisbury Street.

#### **6. To welcome the Speaker, Ian Newman**

The Mayor introduced the guest Speaker Mr Ian Newman.

Mr Newman gave an entertaining and informative talk on the Town of Fordingbridge, it's history and the present town. Through a DVD, "My Town, Your Town, Our Town", the audience saw how the town had grown and developed over the years from a small town with several mills and areas of industry, including the production of sailcloth.

Past entertainments which have since ceased included an annual street fair in Church Square (Church Street) and also an annual regatta, which was a large event & well renowned both locally and further afield. Mr Newman gave details of the history of the church of St. Marys and the High Street together with the 3 former hospitals, one located near the A338 flyover, one at the top end of Bowerwood Road on the outskirts of the town and the latest on the current site at The Bartons.

The speaker raised concerns over several current issues within the town including Town Signs, weed growth and other general untidiness.

The Mayor thanked Mr Newman for his interesting presentation.

**7. To receive any other relevant parish business**

Mr D Gumbrecht raised concern over safety issues generated in the Burgate Fields area during school drop off and pick up times, with many vehicles and pedestrians causing problems on a residential area and street which does completely benefit from the provision of a pavement.

This issue had been the subject of a presentation by the Burgate Fields Residents Company at the General Council meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 and was an ongoing discussion with the District and County Councils.

The Mayor, Cllr Connolly, thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 9.00pm