

## **FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 8:40pm (Minutes draft until approved at the following meeting of the Committee)**

**Present:** Cllr Wilson – Chair  
Cllrs Adams, Earth, Goldsmith, Hale, Lewendon & Perkins

**In Attendance:** Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk  
Mrs M Coatham, RFO  
Cllr Anstey (Public Gallery)  
A representative of Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society  
("RFFS")  
A representative from the Salisbury Journal

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

No apologies.

**2. To receive any declarations of interest**

No declarations of interest.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 and report on any matters arising.**

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

No matters arising.

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

No matters raised.

**5. To report on any matters concerning St Marys Closed Churchyard and Stuckton Road Cemetery**

No matters raised.

**6. Matters relating to the Town Hall**

The Clerk reported that further to visiting the Town Hall the conservation had provided a report in relation to the work proposed in the Town Council's planning application. This report, which set out some concerns of the officer and some potential mitigation in relation to the scheme, had been circulated to members. Cllr Hale felt that, given the conservation officer's views, the application was likely to go to committee. The Clerk advised that the planning officer felt that the application should go to committee in any event for transparency. Following receipt of the conservation officer's report, the architect suggested speaking further to the heritage and planning consultants to obtain their views, followed up by an online meeting with either the conservation or planning officer, as deemed appropriate. Cllr Wilson agreed with some of the conservation officer's comments, which she felt could be accommodated. The officer's suggestion to open up the ceiling was discussed. Cllr Lewendon advised that the suspended ceiling was to improve the acoustics in the hall. Cllr Adams agreed and added that he did not feel the conservation officer's suggestion regarding the ceiling was possible as there was another floor above it. Cllr Hale wanted for the scheme to be progressed and alternative options were discussed including using the Council Chamber as office space and moving the stairs. Cllr Hale said the architect should proceed as suggested but if the scheme was not possible alternative options should be considered.

## **7. To report on any matters relating to the Information Office**

- To consider the opening hours of the Information Office

The Clerk had emailed members regarding a proposed change to the public opening hours at the Information Office. The service agreement with the NFDC required the provision of NFDC services three days a week. The suggestion was to only open three days a week from the beginning of January after the majority of parking clocks had been sold this year. This would free up the time of the Information Office staff to undertake other Town Council work. During the busier summer months from the beginning of April the office would then revert to five days a week until the end of September. Cllr Lewendon felt that this was a reasonable suggestion. Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and therefore RESOLVED: to adopt the revised opening hours suggested by the Clerk for the Information Office. All in favour.

The Clerk reported that a physical, visual barrier had been put in place between the customer and staff areas, a lock had been fitted to the door from the front to the rear office and CCTV had been installed in the front office.

## **8. To report any matters concerning footpaths**

- Jobs for Lengthsman – 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021

No jobs identified.

The representative from the RFFS advised that it was suggested at a Quadrant meeting that there would be restriction on activities on crown land. She had seen a proposal (that has not gone out to consultation yet) that will have a considerable impact on the use of that land by local residents, which she suggested should be resisted.

## **9. To report on any matters concerning Allotments**

- To review the allotment fees for the calendar year 2022

The Clerk had circulated suggested allotment fees for 2022 of £22.50 for a half plot and £36 for a full plot. Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore RESOLVED: to agree the proposed allotment fees for the calendar year 2022. All in favour. Cllrs discussed whether a loss was made on the allotments and the RFO noted the expense this year of a new gate and boreholes and that there had not been the expense of rental of a toilet. Cllr Wilson said that there had been no complaints about there not being a toilet. The Clerk advised that the water troughs had been delivered to the new allotment site but that there was still some work to be done by the developers before the site could be used.

## **10. To discuss budget proposals for 2022/2023 financial year and make a recommendation to the Finance & Policy Committee meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

Cllr Wilson noted that at present it was proposed for there to be a metered water supply at the new allotments. She felt that boreholes and pumps should be installed but this would be a good use of CIL funds. The RFO raised the issue of succession planning for the ground staff and building some additional cost into the budget. She noted the cost of ground staff was split between the General Purposes and Amenities committees. The RFO wants the Buildings Manager to look at the condition of the bungalow and said the council should consider its plans longer term for this building.

[The representative of the RFFS left the meeting]

Cllrs and the RFO discussed the proposed community orchard, the type of trees and the condition of the soil (which should be investigated before planting). The timing of planting the community orchard was discussed and November 2022 was suggested. Cllr Wilson suggested that for this project there should be an increase of £2k in the sum allocated to allotments and community projects. The projected cost of the orchard is £3k but this would not all need to be met by the Town Council. An increase of £2k would increase the amount required from the precept from £42k to £44k. Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr

Perkins and therefore RESOLVED: to recommend the sum of £44,750.50 was needed from the precept for the 2022/2023 General Purposes budget. All in favour.

**11. To note any items of correspondence**

No correspondence

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

It was noted that care should be taken by the contractor when strimming around the headstones.

**13. To note the date of the next meeting as 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022**

The meeting finished at 9.08pm.