

## **FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 8pm**

held remotely using appropriate technology in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police and Crimes Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) which came into force on 4th April 2020.

**(Minutes draft until approved at the following meeting of the Committee)**

**Present:** Cllr Wilson – Chairman  
Cllrs Adams, Earth, Goldsmith, Hale, Jackson & Lewendon

**In Attendance:** Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk  
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk  
Mrs K Downie, Information Officer  
Mrs R Croker, Footpath Officer  
Cllr Paton (Public Gallery)  
A representative from the Salisbury Journal

#### **1. To elect a chairman**

Cllr Earth proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED**: that Cllr Wilson be elected as Chairman of the General Purposes Committee. All in favour.

#### **2. To receive any apologies for absence**

Cllr Adams proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: that Cllr Earth be elected as Vice Chairman of the General Purposes Committee. All in favour.

#### **3. To receive any apologies for absence**

No apologies were received.

#### **4. To receive any declarations of interest**

No declarations were made.

#### **5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and report on any matters arising.**

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020 as a true record. All in favour.

#### **Matters arising**

Agenda Item 4 –The Men’s Shed committee will write a proposal for the old toilet block, to be considered at the next General Council meeting. This is subject to the old toilet block not being required by the sports clubs for storage.

Agenda item 11 – The Playscheme has been cancelled by the Fordingbridge School Federation due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

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

No matters raised.

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

Nothing to report

## 8. Matters relating to the Town Hall

The sketch proposals that Sheerin Bettle had produced have been sent to members and also reviewed by Town Council staff. Comments and suggested potential amendments have been collated and sent to Sheerin Bettle for their review. The Clerk plans to have a conversation with Sheerin Bettle and ask for a revised proposal, which will then be circulated. Cllr Adams suggested asking the conservation officer for their thoughts on the proposed works. Councillors were keen to keep this project moving. The Clerk reminded members that it was agreed last year that buildings related matters and their budgets would sit under the Finance and Policy Committee so it can be discussed further at the next Finance and Policy meeting.

**Action: Clerk to discuss changes to plans with Sheerin Bettle and ask for a revised proposal**

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

- a. To agree a quote for protective screens

Risk assessments have been drafted as part of the planned reopening of the office. Protective screening needs to be installed.

Option 1 - 2 metre high floor standing screens with an overhang at the top for additional protection at a cost of £1800 +VAT. The lead time is 7 days.

Option 2 - Individual screens, 1m wide by 75cm tall. £130 each.

Option 3 - 1 metre high, desk standing screening around the full length of the information office counter at a cost of £479. The quote included scope to have a cut-out area to pass papers or a card payment machine through. The lead time is 7 days. NFDC currently has no proposed date for information offices reopening.

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Adams and therefore **RESOLVED**: to go for option 3 and buy protective screens for the information office for £479. All in favour.

The Clerk reported that FTC hasn't yet received the £6375 service level agreement payment due from NFDC, although he has seen some correspondence that has indicated that it should be forthcoming.

## 10. To report any matters concerning footpaths

The Footpath Officer reported on the work being done at the water meadows south of Fordingbridge on the Avon Valley Path towards Bickton. Lots of trees have been felled and branches, fences and barbed wire were left blocking the footpaths. She reported that HCC are dealing with the footpath issue and although work still needs doing, that is generally being resolved. The footpath officer reported that members of the public have been very concerned about the vast number of trees felled, especially during bird nesting season. A fence owned by Wessex Water has also been damaged during these works. The Information Officer reported that an NFDC Tree Officer had carried out a site inspection and felt that there was no enforcement action which could be taken based on the fact that the land is not in a Conservation Area, there are no Tree Preservation Orders on any of the felled trees, nor on any of the trees left standing. The Tree Officer took a brief look through the debris and couldn't see any evidence of destruction of bird habitat. FTC contacted the Countrywatch Police Department and are awaiting a report. The Forestry Commission are interested in whether the landowners had the right licences to undertake this work and will be investigating.

The footpath officer said there were reports of trees down on the old Breamore railway line which goes through Burgate. Despite this path not being on the definitive map, HCC have removed these trees. She reported that there are frequently reports on this path but it is not

allowed to be cut until the all seeds have been distributed. She thought that a lot of the cutting list could not yet be done.

The footpath officer reported that some new railings have been installed on two of the concrete areas at Burgate Manor Farm. She also reported on the extra funding for historic routes. One of the routes starts at Stuckton Road cemetery and continues into Hyde parish. Work has begun on this route with new gates and a new bridge.

The footpath officer reported that she is trying to determine who owns the land adjacent to the junior school (footpath 84). The white house on the corner has some cabling that is being hit by branches of trees growing on this land. She has been in touch with Cllr Sevier (NFDC) who suggested a meeting with Cllr Heron (HCC). Cllr Wilson asked to join this meeting.

The Assistant Clerk reported that Fordingbridge Town Council would like to apply for a change in the definitive map to make the dismantled railway line between Downwood Close and Marl Lane an official Right of Way. This land is owned by NFDC and has been used for many years or even decades by walkers. The usual way of applying would take at least six years to be approved, after having submitted the application with evidence. Evidence would need to be in the form of questionnaires, supplied by HCC and completed by locals, saying locals have used the path for x years. She reported that there is another way to have the land recognised sooner. Having spoken to Ben Marsh, Map Review Officer at HCC, he suggested a far quicker and cheaper way to have this path recognised on the Definitive Map. He said that as the land belongs to NFDC, then if NFDC are happy to dedicate this land then the process could take as little as 3 or 4 months. A creation agreement would be drawn up between NFDC and HCC. NFDC would need to send an email to Ben Marsh asking him to send the forms and the plans would then be drawn up. HCC would pay NFDC's legal fees. Ben indicated that this was a really good time to do this as the legal teams are less busy than usual due to the Coronavirus pandemic. The assistant clerk then emailed the district councillors who indicated that nothing would be done for a good while yet. The Clerk is following this up with Cllr Sevier.

**Action: Clerk to speak to Cllr Sevier about the open space between Marl Lane and Downwood Close being added to the definitive map.**

The issue of this open space not being recognised as an official ROW raised the question of whether the new footpaths on the new housing developments would be added to the definitive map. A meeting will be arranged between FTC and Claire Upton-Brown, Head of Planning at NFDC to discuss various planning matters.

**Action: Clerk to arrange meeting with NFDC Head of Planning**

### **11. Matters concerning Highways**

Cllr Wilson reported that the speed limit on Whitsbury Road goes from 30 to 40 and back to 30 again in quick succession. Some of the signs are also obscured by overgrown trees. Cllr Lewendon reported that some of the speed limit signs are leaning over where they have been hit by vehicles and the poles are bent.

**Action: Asst Clerk to write to Highways**

### **12. Matters concerning Allotments**

Cllr Wilson reported that the allotments are looking very good as the allotment owners have had lots of time to work on them during lockdown. She asked if the Groundsman could take out the big bramble next to the car park. The Clerk reported that some allotment owners had asked about the portable toilet that is normally on site during the summer months but he didn't think it would be appropriate to have one this year due to the risk of transmitting Coronavirus. Members agreed. There is one tenant with money outstanding.

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

The Clerk reported that he had received an email from the playscheme leader saying that the playscheme has been cancelled by the Fordingbridge School Federation due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

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

Cllr Wilson asked about the meeting with Claire Upton Brown, Head of Planning. The Clerk has suggested some dates and is waiting for Claire Upton-Brown to come back to him. Cllr Wilson suggested that FTC make a small list of things we want to discuss.

***Action: Clerk to arrange meeting and send suggested list of items for discussion to Councillors***

**15. To note the date of the next meeting as 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

The meeting finished at 8.34pm