

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 31st August 2022 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

Present: Cllr Jackson – Chair;

Cllrs Anstey, Earth, Goldsmith, Hale, Lewendon, Millar, Paton, Perkins, White & Wilson

In attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, RFO

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Adams

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No interests declared.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27th July 2022 and report any matters arising

Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Perkins and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th July 2022 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising: **Clerk to write to Co-Op**

4. To receive any matters raised by Members of the Public

No matters raised.

5. To receive details of Monies Collected & Payment of Accounts

Cllr Jackson referred to the RFO's report to members and confirmed that all the payments were correct. The RFO confirmed that the PWLB loan rate was fixed at the point of borrowing. The RFO confirmed that the Council had fixed its energy rates on its buildings but the terms varied on each building.

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: to approve the schedule of payments of account and that the amounts collected are correct. All in favour.

6. To consider grant applications under Section 137/CIL

- Fordingbridge Historical Society

Cllrs considered the grant application for £500 from the Historical Society, the purpose of the grant and priorities for the Council. Cllr Goldsmith proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve a grant of £200 for the Fordingbridge Historical Society. All in favour.

7. To receive any Finance & Policy matters referred from sub-committees - nil

8. To receive an update on building matters

The Clerk advised that the current planning application had reached an impasse. Cllrs queried how long a planning application could remain unresolved. The Clerk advised that with the scaled back plans, the architect suggested that a stair lift may be a better option than a lift to free up space for the internal design. A stairlift company recommended by the Buildings' Manager was going to review this option in early September. Cllr Paton expressed the view that the Council should proceed with no stairlift or lift if necessary in order to progress matters. Cllrs discussed the need for a stairlift and agreed to wait the outcome of the stairlift review. The RFO advised that it was likely that any work would likely be funded by way of a PWLB.

9. To review the option to opt out of the SAAA central external auditor appointment arrangements

The Clerk noted that the SAAA had written to confirm that they are due to appoint the external auditors for the next 5-year period (2022-23 until 2026-27). The Town Council are able to opt-out

of this central appointment if required. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and therefore **RESOLVED:** not to opt out of this central appointment. All in favour.

10. To consider the Church fees generated at the Stuckton Road Cemetery

The Clerk reported that during a review of procedure it came to light that agreement had been made in the early 1980's between the Town Council and the Church whereby, in exchange for the Town Council maintaining the cemetery, any income generated from the Church area of the cemetery would be passed to the Town Council. Whilst the Town Council have been maintaining the cemetery it appears that no income has been paid by the Church. It was noted that the income would not be large as the Church area did not accept new burials (rather additions to existing plots). The RFO provided details of the cemetery income and costs. Cllrs asked the Clerk to have further discussions with the church warden regarding the detail of the agreement and to discuss whether an annual contribution with a periodic inflationary uplift might be an option.

11. To note the revised internal audit fees from IAC and mid-year audit date

The Clerk noted that the internal auditor (IAC) had written to confirm that their fees were increasing by £50 plus VAT per visit to £395 (plus VAT). This is the first increase since 2013. Members approved the increased charge. It was noted that the mid-year review would take place on Tuesday 6th December.

12. To review the following policies and registers – none this month

13. To consider request from RFO to change date of November F&P to 23rd November

Members agreed to change the date of the November meeting to 23rd November.

14. To note any items of correspondence

None

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

No report or other relevant business.

16. To note the date of the next meeting as 28th September 2022

The meeting ended at 7:58 pm.