

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 5th October 2022 at 7.30pm
held at the Town Hall**

(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Council)

Present: Cllr Wilson – Chairman
Cllrs Anstey, Earth, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Millar, Paton and Perkins

In Attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk
Rachel Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Sevier (NFDC)
Cllr Bellows (NFDC)
Ruth Croker, Footpath Officer and representative of Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society (RFFS)

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Adams, Goldsmith and White.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th September 2022 and to report on any matters arising

Cllr Hale reported there was an error in the minutes after agenda item 11 and that Cllr Heron had left the meeting rather than Cllr Hale. Cllr Earth proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 7th September 2022 are signed as a true record with Cllr Hale's amendment.

Matters Arising

Agenda item 8 – Cllr Jackson asked if the results of the NFDC residents' survey would be publicly available; Cllr Sevier confirmed they would.

Agenda item 18 – The Clerk met with the Conservation Officer regarding the proposed CCTV on the Town Hall. Approval would be dependent on the size of the cameras and where located.

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

No matters raised.

5. To receive a report on any matters under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act

See appendix for crime report.

6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor gave the following report.

Firstly, I would like to thank Cllr Paton, Cllr Jackson and one of our residents Louise Tonkin for attending the NFDC planning committee to represent us on application 21/10052 land at Whitsbury Road.

Three times I heard the meeting's Chair say "Just to remind you this site is in the Strategic Plan". Why did New Forest District Council feel that this plan was something that they desperately needed to produce? Other councils have deliberately taken their time to see how government's policies on green field sites and housing numbers would develop.

We will lose the rest of the green space within the town if Site 16 is also approved. This green space is the town's lungs. These green spaces will be replaced with a persistent release of pollution from another 1000 car journeys a day. Developers alone earmarked these sites through the Call for Sites system. There were only three responses received. I have no idea where the other sites NFDC told us they looked at were. At last Thursday's meeting, Our District councillor told us there was a need for Social Housing in Fordingbridge, but we know that these homes will not go to Fordingbridge people; they will go to people with more needs within the district. There will be affordable housing. The average wage in Fordingbridge is £24,000. If there are two of you, this will give you a mortgage of £227,000. Will any properties be available at this level?

What does New Forest Council hope to gain? Can the prospect of more council tax revenue justify the destruction of Fordingbridge's remaining countryside? New Forest District Council should have given a lot more time and consulted more with people on the Local Plan. Just because the NFDC Local Plan was judged to be technically sound it does not mean that it is a good plan. The backdrop of the plan seems to be one of a hopelessly overinflated housing need in this area. Surely Site 18 alone would fulfil the local need.

If the town continues to grow with these urban type extensions. The impact will not be sustainable; it will likely overload the town's infrastructure. There is no evidence that extending towns reduces car dependency. It would be better to develop new self-contained developments with their own infrastructure and good transport links. No one is saying that Fordingbridge should not grow, but it must be in a way that the infrastructure can absorb. There is no doubt that landowners are keen to sell and because of the attraction of the nearby New Forest, developers are eager to build. This is "Housing Demand"; it is not "Housing Need" There is a big difference here that New Forest District Council have failed to recognise.

Building a large number of houses in a mad rush for growth risks jeopardising what makes this area attractive. How much can this town take without spoiling what we hold dear? This rush to grow has led to this town having to accept development in inappropriate areas. One resident said "Do you know, I think that I actually hate New Forest District Council for what they are doing to this town". Extreme but I have a lot of sympathy. We as a town are being left to pick up the pieces with no help from the District Council or the County Council.

You will be aware that we have asked for improvements to our town centre and help with the traffic problems and that our requests have been ignored. This morning in the Newly Published Plan October NFDC. £50,000 of CIL to go to Ringwood Town Council. Today Our Assistant Clerk pointed out to me that of the £224,000 Welcome Back Fund awarded to NFDC and the £159,000

Reopening High Streets Safely Fund allocated to the New Forest, Fordingbridge got a water bottle refill station, a contribution to our Jubilee celebrations, some footfall data and maybe some trees. The Clerk emailed the District Councillors and officers several times asking how to access these funds but to no avail. We find this somewhat disappointing given that New Milton, Lymington, Ringwood, Burley and Brockenhurst were able to benefit, so presumably had access to this information. Trying to communicate with the district council officers and being ignored is unacceptable.

7. To receive a report from the County Councillor

No report received.

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Waste Strategy

Cllr Sevier attended a meeting last week regarding the waste strategy, the location of the new recycling plant and the price of wheelie bins.

Homelessness

Cllr Bellows reported that homelessness is rising in the area and due to become worse due to the 6-month support for Ukrainian refugees ending and the cost of living crisis worsening. Cllr Wilson asked if NFDC are building more Council houses and whether priority for assistance could be given to local people. Cllr Sevier replied that the policy is in the process of being written.

[Cllrs Sevier and Bellows left the meeting.]

9. To receive the following Committee meeting minutes and any recommendations to General Council contained therein.

- Finance and Policy Committee – 28th September 2022 – received Cllr Jackson

Cllr Jackson queried whether the following items should have been brought forward to General Council:

- Toilet block demolition
- Ashford sign
- Christmas lights
- Financing of Neighbourhood Plan

The Clerk assured Cllr Jackson that that any updates on these items be taken to the next Finance and Policy Committee meeting and that this was appropriate. Only when a decision is made by a committee which needs to be ratified by General Council, should it be brought to a General Council meeting.

10. To consider Footways in Fordingbridge

Cllr Jackson reported that he had started discussions with Penny Farthing Homes regarding footpaths and links and that footpaths should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr Wilson reported that the footpath behind the Junior School needs upgrading and widening and its legal status needs to be changed to a cycleway rather than a footpath. The footpath officer reported that residents' garden sheds have been sited on the spare land adjacent to the school.

11. To consider Highways in Fordingbridge

- To consider a transport survey proposal

Councillors discussed the offer from a local businessman to pay for a transport survey in Fordingbridge. The resulting work could cost up to £20k to Fordingbridge Town Council. Cllr Jackson reported that all developers conduct traffic surveys so the data should already be available. The Clerk was concerned that the traffic survey be carried out but then the results ignored by Hampshire County Council and there be no money to proceed. He was not convinced that CIL funds could be used for this. The Clerk recommended that if FTC wish to spend £20k on professional services, then it would be better to spend money on a Neighbourhood Plan instead. Cllr Wilson thought a 20mph zone in the town centre may be available but probably not a new road layout.

Action: Clerk to write to local businessman to decline his offer to pay for a transport survey as it is unlikely to produce the desired results and could be a waste of money.

12. To consider Council provision during the Cost of Living crisis

The Clerk reported that Information Office staff are available on Tuesdays and Thursdays to run a warm space at the Town Hall, as the Information Office is closed to the public on these days during the winter. This proposal could be taken to the Cost of Living community group meeting which the Mayor and Asst Clerk will be attending on 20th October.

13. To receive an update from the Strategic and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Councillors discussed the merits of having a neighbourhood plan. They considered focusing on the important issues only, such as cycleways, footways and town centre improvements. Cllr Wilson reported that NFDC will wish to review the Local Plan within five years and will begin to look for additional sites.

14. To consider planting a memorial tree for Her Majesty The Queen

Members agreed they would like to plant a memorial tree in the Recreation Ground, using the compost from the flowers left by members of the public in her memory.

15. To receive an update on plans for the Christmas Lights Switch On

The Fordingbridge Events Group will be organising the Christmas Lights Switch On on Friday 2nd December. The road will be closed from 4pm – 9pm, with the event beginning at 5pm. The NFDC floating free parking day will be used on this day.

Christmas Afternoon Tea will be held on either Thursday 8th or Friday 9th December and a pianist will be booked. Tablecloths will be bought from the Mayor's Allowance.

A public meeting will be held early in 2023 regarding the new Christmas Lights contract. New lights will be purchased for the small Christmas trees this year. Cllr Paton thought that the cost of the Christmas lights should be made public.

16. To report on any Health & Safety issues

Cllr Sevier has written to the Town Council to say that no one should swim in the River Avon due to sewage discharge into the river. FTC have asked the Environment Agency to comment.

17. To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies and meetings attended

Cllrs Wilson and Jackson attended a meeting with Alderholt Parish Council

Cllrs Paton and Jackson spoke at the NFDC Planning Committee meeting on 29th September.

Cllr Hale attended the Conservation Group AGM on Tuesday 27th September at 7.30pm at the United Reform Church

Cllr Jackson attended a seminar in Lyndhurst about NFDC Film Locations on 21st September

Cllr Millar attended an online NALC event on 28th September "Working between the tiers"

18. To note any items of correspondence

No correspondence.

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

Nothing further to report.

20. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 2nd November 2022

The meeting closed at 9:10p.m.

Fordingbridge Town Beat Report

Hello to all, thank you for taking your time to read this beat report for the month of September 2022. I am PCSO Rhys McCormick 18330, local PCSO allocated to Fordingbridge Town; I also cover the town with my colleague PC Elliott O'Sullivan 28307. Please email me at rhys.mccormick@hampshire.pnn.police.uk if you ever have any questions or queries.

Figures for September – Please be aware I have only included statistics regarding offences that are relevant to the community, and confirmed offences. Some domestic related statistics may be included.

7x Theft (Four theft from a motor vehicle, One theft of a motor vehicle, found, seized and in compound for forensic investigation; One theft of a pedal bike)

2x Burglary non-dwelling/business (Power tools stolen from an outbuilding, no further line of enquiry available due to low-level investigate opportunity such as CCTV, witnesses, forensics, serial numbers of tools etc)

1x Burglary within a dwelling (house broken into by means of force used, potentially linked to drug cuckooing)

4x Criminal Damage (Suspect identified and due in for interview, remains currently under investigation)

4x Public Order Offences (Behaviour that has caused or is likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress. And/or a person acts with intent to cause such; Two currently under investigation.

9x Assault (Two assaults resulting in an injury; Four resulting with no injury)

Non-Crime, Antisocial behaviour reports – 2 reports of anti-social behaviour within the community. Behaving in an anti-social manner, causing a nuisance.

Suspicious Behaviour / Person(s) / Subject – 10 reports of suspicious behaviour, vehicle &/or person.

Our community are our eyes and ears, please continue to report criminality, suspicious behaviour & activity to the Police directly, any information regarding concerns in your community is greatly appreciated.

 www.hampshire.police.uk
Deaf? Non-emergency text
07781 480999
For crime and community information
 www.hampshirealert.co.uk

HAMPSHIRE ALERT

 **HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY**
101
IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999

 **YOU YOUR FAMILY OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER**

 **HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY**