

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th December 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, Goldsmith, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Millar, Perkins and White

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

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Paton.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd November 2022 and to report on any matters arising

Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 2nd November 2022 are signed as a true record.

Matters arising

8 – Cllrs Sevier and Bellows have made a donation to Avonway Community Centre to support local residents during the Cost of Living crisis.

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

[Cllr Perkins entered the meeting.]

A member of public asked that FTC request an extension of time to the Consultation Period on the Hampshire Minerals and Waste Plan

Action: Add item to Planning Committee Agenda - To consider requesting an extension of time to respond to the Revisions Proposed for Consultation to the Hampshire Mineral Plan

[The member of public left the meeting.]

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

See appendix for crime report.

The Clerk reported that PCSO Rhys McCormick will shortly be leaving the New Forest West Neighbourhood Policing Team to start his new role as a PC in January with Thames Valley Police. PCSO McCormick is unlikely to be replaced in the team; PCSO Steve May will become the main point of contact again.

The Clerk reported that Inspector Ord is willing to attend a meeting.

Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting with Inspector Ord and invite representatives of Parish Councils from the surrounding villages.

6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor reported that she has twice attended Avonway Community Centre's "Friends on Fridays" which runs from 8.30am – 4pm and is a warm space for local residents. Free refreshments are served all day and free soup and a roll is served between 12 noon and 2pm. She reported it is well attended and encouraged other Councillors to see the good work going on there.

The Mayor reported that the Christmas Lights Switch On Event was extremely successful.

The Mayor invited 60 households from Flaxfields End to a consultation about the children's play area on Saturday 26th November. Only one resident attended.

The Mayor attend the Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks Information Event on Monday 5th December at Fordingbridge Town Hall. The SSEN Customer and Community Advisors spoke about welfare provisions that are available during power outages and encouraged eligible residents to sign up for Priority Services. They advised all residents to become self-resilient and prepare for power cuts, for example by having some warm clothes and a battery-powered torch to hand.

7. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr Heron gave the following report.

On Monday 14th November, Councillor Rob Humby, Leader of Hampshire County Council, sent a letter jointly with the Leader of Kent County Council to the Prime Minister warning that without intervention both Councils would become financially unviable within the next few years.

The contents of the letter should not come as a surprise to anyone who has heard me speak about Hampshire County Council's financial position at Town and Parish Council meetings over recent years.

Unfortunately, some media outlets have given the misleading impression that the letter indicates that Hampshire County Council is at imminent risk of going bankrupt, this is far from the case. Hampshire has consistently made incredibly difficult decisions to make the necessary savings in order to protect key service areas, such the Children's and Adults' services, protecting our most vulnerable and at-risk residents.

Making these tough and often unpopular decisions in a timely way, along with robust financial management, means that Hampshire will be one of the last upper-tier local authorities to arrive at the cliff edge of effective bankruptcy. However, without either changes to the statutory framework the Council operates under and/or additional funding, we will come to that cliff edge and the knowledge that Hampshire will be one of the last to get there is of no solace.

Cllr Heron reiterated that Hampshire and Kent County Councils are two of the best run Councils in the country. HCC has repeatedly cut its budgets to make savings and although HCC has asked Government for help, there is little money available. HCC is considering running core services only and stopping anything that is not a legal requirement. HCC have suggested to Government that some legislation is now out of date and could be changed, for example the requirement to provide free home to school transport to every child living further

than 3 miles from the nearest suitable school. If those parents who could afford to were asked to contribute, then £20M savings could be made. Cllr Heron reported that further details of the Autumn Statement would be published on 23rd December.

Cllr Heron said he will be taking on responsibility for HCC Children's Services in the New year, and this will include the libraries too.

Action: Youth Action Steering Group in Fordingbridge to be restarted in the New Year

Cllr Jackson reported that engaging with Hampshire Highways was difficult. Cllr Heron said that the Access Strategy would be published imminently and confirmed that work would be done on the High Street. The bricks laid in the High Street made resurfacing more difficult and expensive; Cllr Heron would like to see them replaced with tarmac.

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Sevier reported that £3.4M has been transferred from reserves into the Housing and Homeless budget as NFDC are anticipating greater need in this area.

Cllr Bellows reported that NFDC approved a recommendation for a Council Tax empty homes premium and a Council Tax second homes premium at its December Cabinet meeting– this affects 203 and 1608 properties respectively.

Cllr Wilson raised the case of a local lady who was in danger of becoming homeless and was asked to contact the district councillors after the meeting with further information. Cllr Heron emphasised that there is no need for anyone to sleep on the streets. There is emergency housing and emergency overnight accommodation available and a 24-hour telephone number to call. Anyone in a vulnerable situation should contact NFDC at the earliest opportunity.

Cllr Lewendon asked about specific trees which had been recently felled. Cllr Sevier said that the NFDC tree policy states that for every tree felled, another two would be planted.

Cllr Millar said there was local concern about the new junction layout between Salisbury Road and the A338. He asked if it is Manual for Streets compliant and was told it was. Cllr Lewendon was concerned that the acceleration lane for vehicles travelling north from Fordingbridge has been removed. Cllr Heron said he would be attending a meeting in the New Year regarding the A338 in general.

[Cllrs Heron, Sevier and Bellows left the meeting.]

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

- Planning Committee – 9th November 2022 – received Cllr Lewendon
- Amenities Committee – 16th November 2022 – received Cllr White
- General Purposes Committee – 16th November 2022 – received Cllr Wilson
- Finance & Policy Committee – 23rd November 2022 – received Cllr Jackson

Cllr Jackson advised that to bring forward extra projects, budgets should be looked at again before the precept is confirmed.

Action: Clerk to arrange an Extraordinary Finance and Policy Committee meeting on 4th January 2023

10. Review of Council's membership of other bodies.

- Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC)
- Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)
- New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC)
- Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM)
- Community First New Forest
- Go New Forest
- Rural Market Towns Group

Councillors discussed the merits of membership of the above bodies. Since the Chief Executive retired, the benefits of membership of Go New Forest were not considered to be worth the annual cost. Similarly, the Rural Market Towns Group was not considered to be a beneficial organisation to Fordingbridge.

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore **RESOLVED**: to continue membership of all bodies with the exception of Go New Forest and the Rural Market Towns Group.

11. To consider Footways in Fordingbridge

The footpath officer reported that there is a greater volume of traffic along Whitsbury Road and Salisbury Road and more speeding vehicles, such that she considered the pavements to no longer be safe along these roads. Cllr Lewendon reported that the pavement along Whitsbury Road is covered with mud and is dangerous. The footpath officer reported that the pavement alongside Salisbury Road is lower than the road and regularly becomes flooded and muddy.

Action: Footpath Officer to email photos to Asst Clerk to report to HCC

12. To consider Highways in Fordingbridge

At last month's General Council meeting a local resident reported that his garden wall at the junction of Whitsbury Road and Alexandra Road had been knocked down several times by large lorries on their way to Elliotts Builders Merchants. He was concerned about the danger to pedestrians including school children and the safety risk to the electricity pole. This has been raised with HCC who are working on a formal response.

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

- To consider a report from the group and agree a way forward
- To consider a report in relation to the Recreation Ground

To consider a report from the Strategic and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and agree a way forward

Cllr Jackson gave the following report.

At its meeting on 3rd August the Town Council agreed to approve and adopt a Strategic Plan. A copy of the Plan has been provided to all members of the Town Council.

The Steering Group is not a decision-making group. Rather it is tasked with undertaking research and tasks on a wide range of matters linked to the Strategic Plan and reporting back to the General Council with recommendations as appropriate.

The Steering Group has met twice since the adoption of the Strategic Plan and discussed how best it can forward work linked to the themes and actions set out in the Strategic plan. These are under the headings of:

- *Transport and highways*

- *Leisure and recreation*
- *Nature and the built Environment*
- *Finance*

Transport and Highways

We need to get a response from HCC about their Access Strategy.

1. *Suggest that Cllrs Wilson, Jackson and the Clerk coordinate a campaign to get some response.*
2. *Mike Harley (Member of Public) to present some of his proposals on how the High Street could be managed.*
3. *Develop a master plan of all existing paths/cycleways in the area and make sure they link up with those being planned by developers.*

Leisure and Recreation

1. *Recreation Ground.*
See Cllr Millar's PowerPoint presentation.
2. *Management of New Public Open Spaces. Await NFDC signing off the section 106 agreement for Tinkers Cross. Pennyfarthing Homes will discuss with us the terms and payments that will enable us to decide whether we want to take it on.*
3. *Existing open space sites, such as Queens Gardens, Flaxfields, Allenwater Drive, Normandy Way, Bishops Pond, Allotments etc. FTC funding should be used for many of these*
4. *Mike Harley (Member of Public) has experience of how Bournemouth Borough Council have set up a Charitable Trust to run their open spaces. This has encouraged more volunteers to get involved in managing the sites and has enabled the Charity to bid for outside funding which is denied to the Council.*

The Burgate Hub

This does not just mean the Burgate School. But the Infant and Junior Schools, the Metis Homes land, a private developer's land on Site 18 and some Pennyfarthing Homes land.

To maximize the benefits which could come from a Strategic Plan FTC need to engage with the whole community. Over half the residents of the town have daily contact with either school through children or grandchildren. Engaging with them and sharing their plans can only be good and we have the Executive Head of the Federated school and the deputy Head of Burgate on our steering group.

We also have regular engagement with Pennyfarthing Homes and the private developer.

The Burgate School already have advanced plans for a replacement All Weather pitch and changing rooms with substantial funding coming from the Football Foundation. This funding requires a legal agreement ensuring community access to the facilities.

Finance

Clearly this will be a major element of the Strategic Plan and certainly there will not be enough to complete all these tasks in the short term. We will need to cost all these items and try and list what funds may come from HCC, NFDC, CIL and other funding agencies.

We need to work up as many of our wishes into "oven ready" projects to enable us to make bids. And we will need to recruit a fund raising manager, hopefully from within our residents.

Much of Cllr Wilson's wish list should be funded from FTC resources and actioned ASAP.

Cllr Wilson queried where the Burgate Hub would be and was told it would be on Strategic Site 18. Cllr Jackson said that the school have plans for a Burgate Hub and as part of the Football Association conditions, there would need to be community involvement. Cllr Wilson thought NFDC plan to give the schools £85k for an artificial pitch, but she would prefer the money to be spent on a MUGA instead. She said that only clubs would be able to use the Burgate Hub as booking is required, she thought that the general public would not be able to use it. She said that 442 new dwellings need formal open space and none is provided on site 18.

Cllr Wilson said there is a Green Flag Award for local parks and recommended that FTC work towards this.

Action: Cllr Wilson to forward plan to Councillors

Cllr Anstey said that quality open space for residents will attract tourists. Cllr White said that FTC does not need to change the Rec, it just needs to improve it to maximise what we already have.

Councillors confirmed they were happy with Cllr Jackson's report above and encouraged him to keep going.

To consider a report in relation to the Recreation Ground

Cllr Millar gave a PowerPoint presentation to the meeting in relation to Fordingbridge Recreation Ground and prioritising areas for development.

14. To agree the dates of the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2023

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: to accept the proposed dates of the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2023. All in favour. See appendix for list of dates.

15. To agree Christmas donations to Foodbank and Salvation Army Christmas Present Appeal

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: to give contributions from the Mayor allowance of £500 to the Food Bank and £500 to the Salvation Army Present Appeal.

16. To report on any Health & Safety issues

Wild Swimming

Cllr Sevier advised previously that swimming in the River Avon should be avoided until after the water treatment works at Frog Lane have been upgraded in 2023 / 24, due to the sewage discharge into the river.

Wessex Water confirmed that caution needs to be taken when swimming in any river for a number of reasons. Further information can be found on Wessex Water's Wild Swimming web pages and from Public Health England advice.

The fully treated discharge from Fordingbridge Water Recycling Centre (WRC) is not disinfected so does carry bacteria. This discharges 24/7 365 days a year. The storm overflow, which spills around 30 or 40 times per year, will carry higher loads of bacteria. Studies have not yet been done to apportion their impact on the river water quality.

There are two storm overflows in the town and their spill data for 2021, a relatively dry year, are as follows. This data is published on the Environment Agency's and Wessex Water's web pages for all monitored overflows:

ID	Site	2021		
		spills	Duration (hours)	Monitor Operational - %
13128S	WRC settled storm overflow	31	85	100%
17212C	Salisbury St CSO	33	400	100%

NB. 1 spill approximately equates to *any discharge activity in a 24 hr period*

It should be noted that there are likely to be other sectors with permitted discharges to the river, particularly from private septic tanks or treatment works which may also have an impact.

Wessex Water have an automatic notification system for informing key users of storm overflow spills, primarily at designated bathing waters. FTC have now been added to this notification system although Wessex Water noted that this is quite a crude tool and believe a better solution is to adopt real-time water quality monitoring systems. Trials are taking place elsewhere.

Posts on Whitsbury Road

Cllr Lewendon reported that there is insufficient lighting to see the new posts on Whitsbury Road

Action: Clerk to report to Hampshire Highways as dangerous to pedestrians

17. To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies and meetings attended
Cllrs Jackson, Paton and Millar attended a Community Partnership meeting at Burgate School on 17th November

Cllrs Jackson and Paton attended a meeting with the Head of the Fordingbridge Infant and Junior Schools Federation and the Chair of Governors on 11th November. The Head has now joined the Strategic and Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

Cllr Anstey attended:

- the Environment Agency Flood Warden briefing on 23rd November
- Flaxfields Play Area consultation on 26th November
- Scottish and Southern Electricity Networks meeting on 5th December

18. To note any items of correspondence

Rotary Club Signs

The Rotary Club of Fordingbridge have asked permission to erect "Fordingbridge Rotary: Serving the Community" signs up on the main approach roads, along with the existing "Welcome to Fordingbridge" signs. Councillors thought the existing signs sufficient. However, there are other places new boards would be appreciated and perhaps the Rotary Club would like to sponsor new information boards at Sweatford Water Meadow and at the Recreation Ground instead.

Christmas Event

The Clerk reported that positive feedback has been received after the Christmas Lights Switch On Event on 2nd December, saying that "It was such a lovely atmosphere down the High Street with all the stalls" and "How good the Christmas Lights look in town this year. The plump small trees over the shops with the new brighter one colour lights really do now compliment the more up to date catenary lighting across the streets".

Fordingbridge Surgery

A member of public raised the fact that just 38.6% of Fordingbridge Surgery's appointments are face-to-face, according to new NHS data which shows the performance of GPs up and down the country. This is well below the national average of 73.4 per cent and in the bottom three of all practices in Hampshire. He asked that FTC raise and champions this in the near future.

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

The Clerk reported that deepest condolences had been sent from Fordingbridge Town Council to Cllr Malcolm Adams' family, following his death last Wednesday. Mayor and Councillor, Anna Wilson said that Malcolm was highly respected by both the Town Council and the residents of Fordingbridge and he will be missed immensely by all who had the pleasure of knowing him. A thanksgiving service will be held on Wednesday 14th December at St Marys Church in Fordingbridge.

The Fordingbridge Town Council Christmas Afternoon Tea for older residents of the town and volunteers in the community will be held on Thursday 8th December from 2pm to 5pm in the Town Hall.

20. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 4th January 2023

The meeting closed at 9:22p.m.

Fordingbridge Town Beat Report

Hello to all, thank you for taking your time to read this beat report for the month of November 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 November – 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.

8x Theft (One theft from a motor vehicle, One theft of a motor vehicle, Two theft of pedal cycle, Two theft of property, One shoplifting occurrence at Tesco)

2x Burglary non-dwelling/outbuilding (Two dwelling burglary, suspect charged with entering a dwelling with intent to steal, due to appear at Crown Court in January. Other occurrence filed, however, vehicle involved in offence made off from police. Subsequently, vehicle located in New Milton with both passengers arrested for separate matters)

7x Criminal Damage (Unlawful damage to property with intent to destroy or damage, also being reckless as to whether such property would be damaged)

1x Arson (bushes have been set alight)

5x 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, Three currently under investigation)

7x Assault (Three resulting in injury such as battery or actual bodily harm, Four resulting in non-injury such as common assault)

Non-Crime, Antisocial behaviour reports – 7 reports of anti-social behaviour within the community. Behaving in an anti-social manner, causing a nuisance. This may also apply to anti-social vehicles, parking, and manner of driving in a residential area.

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

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

The banner features the following elements from left to right:

- Twitter icon
- Facebook icon
- YouTube icon
- Website: www.hampshire.police.uk
- Text: Deaf? Non-emergency text
- Phone number: **07781 480999**
- Text: For crime and community information
- Website: www.hampshirealert.co.uk
- HAMPSHIRE ALERT** logo with a white arrow pointing right
- Hampshire Constabulary logo with the number **101** and the text "IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999"
- SAFER** logo with the text "YOU YOUR FAMILY OUR COMMUNITIES"
- Hampshire Constabulary crest logo



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Town Clerk – Mr P Goddard

Meeting Dates 2023

All meetings are held in the **Town Hall** at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated on the agenda.

January

04 General Council
11 Planning
18 Amenities & General Purposes
25 Finance & Policy

February

01 General Council
08 Planning
15 -
22 Finance & Policy

March

01 General Council
08 Planning
15 Amenities & General Purposes
22 -
29 Finance & Policy

April

05 General Council
12 Planning
19 **ANNUAL TOWN ASSEMBLY**
26 Finance & Policy

May

03 **ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**
10 Planning
17 Amenities & General Purposes
24 -
31 Finance & Policy

June

07 General Council
14 Planning
21 -
28 Finance & Policy and General Council

July

05 General Council
12 Planning
19 Amenities & General Purposes
26 Finance & Policy

August

02 General Council
09 Planning
23 -
30 Finance & Policy

September

06 General Council
13 Planning
20 Amenities & General Purposes
27 Finance & Policy

October

04 General Council
11 Planning
18 -
25 Finance & Policy

November

01 General Council
08 Planning
15 Amenities & General Purposes
Budget meetings
22 -
29 Finance & Policy – **Budget meeting**

December

06 General Council
13 Planning
20 -
27 -