

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the extra-ordinary Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 25th January 2023 at 7pm
(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)**

Present: Cllrs Earth, Goldsmith, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Millar (Chair), Paton, Perkins and White

In attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk, Mrs M Coatham, RFO, 1 member of public

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs Anstey and Wilson

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 2022 and report any matters arising

Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 23rd November 2022 be signed as a true record. All in favour. No matters arising.

4. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 4th January 2023 and report any matters arising

Cllr Earth proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 4th January 2023 be signed as a true record. All in favour. No matters arising.

5. To receive any matters raised by Members of the Public – none raised

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

Cllr Millar referred to the RFO's report to members, no questions were raised. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: to approve the schedule of payments of account and that the amounts collected are correct. All in favour.

The RFO noted that CNG were in administration (an energy company) and that the Council were owed £23.33 but were unlikely to receive this and therefore requested approval to write off the sum due. Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: to write off the sum owed by CNG.

7. To consider grant applications under Section 137/CIL

- Avon Valley Community Matters: The Clerk read out an email supporting the application from Cllr Wilson. Discussion took place about the services provided by this group. It was agreed that there was sufficient evidence that this grant met FTC requirements and offered a good service to a large number of residents in the town. Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and therefore **RESOLVED**: to grant £500 to Avon Valley Community Matters. All in favour.
- 1st Sandleheath Sea Scouts: discussion took place about the activities of this group. It was agreed that there was sufficient evidence that this grant met FTC requirements. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore **RESOLVED**: to grant £490 to 1st Sandleheath Sea Scouts. All in favour.

8. To receive any Finance & Policy matters referred from sub-committees - none

9. To receive an update on building matters

- The Clerk reported that the planning application for the Town Hall was likely to be recommended for approval by the planning officer.
- The Clerk reported that Smiths of Derby were going to provide information to provide drawings for the removal of the clock winder for consideration by planning.

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- Flower planters – the planning officer had requested a Design & Access Statement and a Heritage Statement for this application. Cllr Wilson had agreed to prepare the documents.
- Town Hall sockets – the Clerk reported that works were required to prevent the kitchen sockets tripping the electrical supply at the town hall. This would be actioned.
- Dishwasher – following discussion it was agreed to ask Tampen & Tampen to review the 2019 quote for repair.
- Toilet block demolition – the Clerk reported that three quotes had been received for demolition and asbestos removal and that all that was required was planning permission which was currently being considered by NFDC.

10. To receive mid-year internal audit observations

The RFO had circulated the auditors report and members were asked to note the observations therein:

- B1: The Clerk was not CiLCA qualified (although the RFO is) – the Clerk is currently studying for the qualification.
- B2: Are bank signatory arrangements in accordance with the Financial Regulations. The RFO noted that in practice the Clerk and RFO were able to authorise payments (bank mandate) and that the Financial Regulations due to be reviewed later in the meeting had been amended to reflect this.
- C1: Risk has not yet been reviewed – historically this is done in February each year (after mid-year audit but prior to year end) and was on the agenda for the next meeting.
- C2: Internal Control – this was a new notification by the Auditor – the RFO has reviewed what other councils do and has prepared a document clarifying internal control for approval at the next Finance & Policy meeting.
- E1: Is income due on investments subject to regular check and verification? This was considered with the Council Investment Policy and item 11 at this meeting was to review procedure.
- E2: Income received has been appropriately treated for VAT purposes. The RFO noted that VAT treatment had been reviewed a number of times since IAC commenced audits in 2012. The Clerk and RFO agreed to review historical documents to establish when the Council registered for VAT and report back to members.
- F1: the Council to consider whether it is necessary to continue to maintain a petty cash, and if so, what value this should be: the RFO confirmed that the petty cash was held in change rather than notes to prevent unnecessary trips to the bank in Ringwood now that all local facilities had closed. Members were happy to support this arrangement and agreed not to reduce the petty cash amount.

11. To agree transferring funds to a higher deposit account

Discussion took place about the use of a higher rate deposit account – historically the Town Council had used fixed term deposits with Lloyds. Options reviewed were a fixed term deposit or a Public Sector Deposit Fund with CCLA (varying rate and fixed fee of 0.08%). Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton to transfer funds to the CCLA. As it was possible to withdraw funds at any time it was agreed to leave the amount to the discretion of the Clerk and RFO. All in favour.

12. To discuss the provision of Christmas Lights for 2023 onwards

It was noted that the three-year contract for the provision of Christmas lights had now ended and the Council needed to decide what to provide for 2023 onwards. Due to the amount of money involved it was agreed that consultation was required. It was proposed that Officers obtained some outline figures to present to residents in the first instance, once these had been obtained the form of consultation would be agreed.

13. To review the following policies and registers

- Consultation Policy

Cllr Millar raised a couple of items regarding this policy and it was agreed that these should be circulated to members and the policy reviewed at the next meeting of F&P (22/2/23). Discussion took place about consulting on the S106 provision on SS18 and it was agreed that Cllr Jackson would circulate a briefing for review at General Council on 1st February 2023.

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- Standing Orders & Financial Regulations

The RFO advised that there had been no updated guidance or changes to the model standing orders and regulations but that a few minor amendments had been made to bring the Financial Regulations in line with procedure at the Council (as advised by IAC). Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and there RESOLVED: to accept the proposed revisions and approve the policies. All in favour.

14. To note any items of Correspondence – letters of thanks had been received from Fordingbridge Scout Group for participation in their annual Christmas Post and for the S137 Grant from NFCAB.

15. To receive a report from the Clerk or any other relevant business - none

16. To note the date of the next meeting as 22nd February 2023

The meeting closed at 8.40pm

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