

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 28th June 2023 at 7:30pm
(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)**

Present: Cllrs Bailey, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Millar (Chair), Paton, Perkins, Shering, White

In attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk, Mrs M Coatham, RFO

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs Cameron, Hinton and Wilson.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 31st May 2023 and report any matters arising

Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 31st May 2023 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising:

Agenda Point 12: Cllrs discussed the Exploring Fordingbridge leaflet and Town Trailway currently sold by the museum. Cllr Jackson felt the latter kept tourists in town and could be sold from the Information Office. Information Office staff had looked at how the Exploring Fordingbridge leaflet could be updated. Information Office sits under the General Purposes committee. **Action: Clerk to progress.**

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

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

The RFO said there was nothing unexpected in the budget summaries. There are general reserves of £108k and CIL of £138k. Cllrs discussed use of general reserves. The RFO advised that councils should hold general reserves of between three and twelve months of operating costs and noted that some costs budgeted for last year had fallen into the current year. Cllrs discussed the requirement to obtain multiple quotes and the circumstances when standing orders might be suspended. Cllrs then discussed the invoice from Bemacross, which required further discussion under agenda point nine.

Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Bailey and therefore **RESOLVED**: to approve the schedule of payments of account (bar the Bemacross invoice) and that the amounts collected are correct. All in favour.

7. To consider requests for funding to support children's activities during the summer holidays from Avon Valley Community Matters, The Branch and TUFF

Cllr Millar switched agenda points six and seven. The RFO advised that a proposal had been received from TUFF to provide play sessions and a story telling session during the summer. The maximum cost of these will be £1,300. The budget for children's play provision for the year is £1,500. A request for funding in relation to children's play provision has been received from Avon Valley Community Matters ("AVCM") and has been submitted as a grant request. The RFO confirmed that this request could be dealt with as a s137 grant under agenda point six. The Branch are asking for £150 which would be within the play budget to help fund a breakfast café. Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Bailey and therefore **RESOLVED**: to give a grant of £150 to the Branch as a contribution towards a breakfast café.

6. To consider grant applications under Section 137/CIL

Cllr Millar advised that AVCM had requested £700 by 15th July and were putting in £500 of its own funds for a new event for children's play sessions. The assistant clerk had pointed out to the applicant that a number of the sessions were not taking place within the Fordingbridge parish boundary. The projects in Fordingbridge amounted to £540 of which £200 related to salary. Cllr Hale

proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED: to pay a grant of £340 to AVCM. All in favour.

8. To receive any Finance & Policy matters referred from sub-committees:

- Nil

9. To receive an update on building matters

- Kiosk/toilet block – There is still an issue with the drainage from the block, albeit further down the run now there is an increased flow capacity from the toilets. Tim Richards has been asked to come up with a solution to this ongoing issue. At present the grounds staff are having to daily put down a bucket of water at the drain. One toilet is still awaiting repair.
- Town Hall – Cllr Hinton had produced a document that addressed the concerns of the Conservation Officer in relation to the clock winding mechanism, which had been submitted at the beginning of this month. A decision should be imminent regarding the application. The Clerk summarised the schemes that had been drawn up in relation to the Town Hall. He had asked Tim Richards to update his costings of the bigger scheme, for which there is planning permission, and also assess the cost of the scaled back scheme. Cllrs could then consider the schemes and what consultation was needed. **Action: Clerk to circulate both scheme drawings.** Cllr Jackson referred to the need to repair the roof regardless of any scheme, which would have to be financed by PWLB loan. Cllr Millar asked if costs for the schemes and an estimate of loan costs could be available for next month's Finance and Policy Committee meeting where it could be agreed what the development should be. **Action: RFO to look at PWLB loan costs.** There was discussion about the Information Office and future funding, which may have an impact on plans for use of the Town Hall. The RFO provided a brief history of the SLA between the NFDC and the Town Council and details of a recent meeting with the NFDC. **Action: Clerk to provide footfall data. Action: Clerk to put the Information Office on next month's agenda followed by the Town Hall.**
- Play surfacing – The Clerk advised that Bemacross had removed the play surfacing as per the agreed quote. The quote included backfilling with topsoil. Tim Richards had inspected the removal at the end of the work and was happy with it but there are wood chippings on the surface and the sand from a former sandpit can be seen coming to the surface. Cllrs discussed the work undertaken and the detail of the quotes, which included backfilling with topsoil and also entailed the removal of the old youth shelter for £2,200. It was noted that the other quote for the removal of the play surface was just over £5,000. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore RESOLVED: to pay Bemacross for the removal of the toilet block, pay half of the element for the removal of the surfacing and shelter, ask the contractor if it met the requirements of the contribution and if a satisfactory response is received then pay the balance without the need to come back to committee. All in favour.

10. To approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023 and to note the following:

- Internal audit report
- Public Rights Notice
- Revised Asset Register

Members noted that internal audit had taken place on 20th June and noted the report from IAC with three observations: With regard to the Kiosk to ensure decisions regarding lease renewal or variation are minuted, to review and rectify a small error when the annual pay rise was allocated and to put in place a process for Cllrs to review and verify assets.

Cllrs discussed the review of assets. **Action: Officers to propose a process for the review and verification of assets.**

The public rights period for this year starts on Monday 3rd July until Friday 11th August and will be being posted following this meeting.

The RFO advised the Annual Governance and Accountability Return and the accounting statements needed to be approved. The RFO summarised to Cllrs the content of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2022/2023.

Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED to approve the Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023. All in favour.

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Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED to approve the Accounting Statements. All in favour.

11. To confirm the revised bank signatories and mandate

Two former Cllrs had been removed from the bank mandate. Cllrs Shering and White are being added to the mandate and all required forms have been submitted to the bank. The signatories on the mandate will be the RFO, the Clerk and Cllrs Jackson, Perkins, Shering and White.

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

13. To note any items of Correspondence - none this month

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

It was noted that the Council has no conflict in appointing BDO as its external auditor.

15. To note the date of the next meeting as 26th July 2023

The meeting closed at 8.44pm