

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 31st May 2023 at 7:30pm
(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)**

Present: Cllrs Bailey, Cameron, Hale, Hinton, Jackson, Lewendon, Millar (Chair), Paton, Shering, White and Wilson

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

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllr Perkins.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26th April 2023 and report any matters arising

Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th April 2023 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising:

Agenda Point 3: Emptying the dog waste bins is being charged monthly. New general waste bins have been ordered so the dog waste bins can be removed. The mixed waste bins would be emptied by the Town Council.

Agenda Point 6: A letter of thanks has been received from Victim Support.

4. To confirm the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 17th 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 17th May 2023 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising:

Agenda point 6: Cllr Bailey was concerned how the area where the play surfacing had been removed was left. Clerk to raise with the Buildings Manager.

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

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

The RFO noted the report to members for May – All were as expected.

Cllr Millar commented on the quality of the course that he and Cllr Hinton and would recommend it to new members.

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

7. To consider grant applications under Section 137/CIL

- The Friends of Western Downland Primary
Discussion took place and it was felt that the grant fell outside the scope of the Town Council's policy as the play equipment would not be for wider community use. Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: to decline the application. All in favour. The RFO would write to the applicant explaining why.

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

- Nil

9. To receive an update on building matters

- Toilet block (old) –. The block has been demolished. There may have been some vandalism to the contractors machinery during the demolition so CCTV footage should be checked.

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- Toilet block (new) – 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. One toilet is still awaiting repair.
- Town Hall – The history of drawings and applications for the Town Hall was discussed. Regarding the application for the clock winder that is currently with the NFDC, Cllr Hinton would prepare additional information for the planning officer to consider. Cllrs discussed moving all staff to Town Hall, how the work might be funded, costing both schemes and consulting residents.
- Paddling Pool – There had been cans and broken bottles thrown in the pool just prior to its opening. The pool was not draining properly, so a contractor is coming out tomorrow to investigate.

10. To consider the future of the bungalow

Cllr Millar summarised three options with regard to the bungalow: (i) retain and include occupation as a requirement for a new staff member, (ii) retain and offer it as an option or (iii) sell it. Cllrs discounted the third option. Cllrs discussed the merits of the bungalow being occupied and options regarding alternative use, such as a café or gym for young people, as there is little in the town for young people to do. Broader discussion took place regarding to what extent the Town Council wants to engage in the provision of youth services and what form that might take. Cllrs expressed a preference for the bungalow to be occupied by a member of staff but acknowledged that this might not be possible. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore RESOLVED: to advertise the vacancy with the bungalow. All in favour. Cllrs then discussed taking improvements that might be needed to the bungalow to the Finance & Policy committee (there is only limited budget of £800 for the bungalow in the General Purposes committee) and the staff vacancy to the Staff and Remuneration committee and also the need for a proper employment contract and separate tenancy agreement.

11. To approve the cost of window boxes at the Town Hall

The cost for the boxes was £580. Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED: to approve the costs of the window boxes. All in favour.

12. To consider updating the Exploring Fordingbridge leaflet

The RFO provided copies of the current leaflet to councillors and advised that it had been developed many years ago and had then been reprinted in 2016/2017. The Information Office hand it out to visitors but the numbers are running low. The last cost of reprinting with no changes was £387. Cllrs agreed with the principle of supplying a leaflet but felt that it needed updating. Cllrs discussed updating the content and obtaining new photos. The Information Office staff could provide a brief for the updated content and Cllr Jackson agreed to contact Fordingbridge Printing to get an estimate of the likely costs of producing a new leaflet.

13. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/2023 – internal audit booked 20/6

The RFO advised that the internal audit was booked in for 20th June. Staff costs for 2022/2023 were up, other costs were down so there is an overall underspend of around £25k, in part due to the costs of demolishing the old toilet block and repairs to the new toilet block would fall into the current financial year (2023/24).

14. To review and agree revised bank signatory arrangements following the election

Cllrs discussed the current banking arrangements. Cllrs Shering and White agreed to be added to the bank signatory mandate.

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

16. To note any items of Correspondence

Thanks had been received for the grant awarded to Victim Support.

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

Cllr Wilson felt that clarification should be obtained from Stephen Belli of the NFDC in relation to the £1m contribution from developers in lieu of on site formal sports provision. He had said 250k would

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go to Burgate School but funds could be available for a MUGA at the Recreation Ground or other projects that the Town Council might bring to the NFDC. The £1m cannot be from CIL. She said the Tinkers Cross agreement requires a £64k contribution for 64 homes (£1,000 per home) but the Metis agreement for 63 dwellings only required a contribution of £22k. Tinkers Cross is not due to be completed until 2025. The £1m is contributions once all sites have been developed and so is a long way off. The NFDC have taken £2m of CIL contribution but has no governance framework in place that lays out its spending arrangements. Cllr Hinton said the payments were from developers as there was no formal recreation on the sites. Each 106 agreement would set out what should be paid. The NFDC is using its CIL on alternative open spaces to alleviate pressure on the National Park. Cllr Wilson was concerned that if there were not off site projects in Fordingbridge then the NFDC would spend the £1m further afield. Cllr Shering expressed concerns that one NFDC planning officer was responsible for all of the strategic sites. Cllr Wilson raised concerns regarding Pennyfarthing's phosphate mitigation and the pricing of the tokens. She would send further information to the Clerk. Cllr Paton did not feel that the NFDC understood how the phosphate mitigation scheme worked. Cllr Wilson said that if the developers had not provided so much ANRG on the sites then there would have been room for formal recreational space. Cllr Hinton felt that these issues tied in with a general lack of engagement and communication from the planning authority. A number of the decision on the site would have been made during the pre-app process with the developer and the NFDC should have engaged with and been briefing the Town Council at that time. Cllrs discussed where that break down in communication arose. Cllr Jackson noted there had also been no further movement with HCC regarding the access strategy. Cllr Lewendon said that it had been reported that the footpath along the side of the cemetery was badly overgrown. It was noted that it was nesting season. Cllr Cameron agreed to investigate.

18. To note the date of the next meeting as 28th June 2023

The meeting closed at 8.38pm