

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Amenities Committee meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 at 7:30p.m. at the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Council)

Present: Cllr White – Chairman
Cllrs Wilson, Millar, Bailey, Jackson, Shering and Paton

In Attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Perkins.

2. To receive any declarations of interest.

No declarations were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2023 and report any matters arising

Cllr Wilson proposed, and it was seconded by Cllr Jackson and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2023 be signed as a true record. Agenda point 5: A meeting took place with the Bathing Water group and Wessex Water. The group are hosting a consultation meeting on 5th October at Avonway. The walking group at the Recreation Ground is growing.

4. To receive any matters raised by Members of the Public

No matters were raised.

5. Matters relating to the Recreation Ground

• To receive an update on setting up a parkrun

Cllr Millar reported that parkrun had come back to say the proposed parkrun looks good and enquiring about dates. The parkrun could be set up quickly but not with the path. Regarding the path, Cllr Millar had spoken to Jamie Burton at the NFDC who had queried the cricket pitch and the required run off areas of the sports pitches if they were moved. Cllr Shering knows the required dimensions of the path and Cllr Bailey felt there was adequate space for the run off areas. Cllr Millar advised that the NFDC still have record of the cricket pitch and Jamie Burton said there would be a need to consult. However, Cllr Millar felt that the NFDC were supportive of the scheme, they just did not want something that might have a negative impact. Cllrs discussed the practicalities of moving the pitches. Cllr White said that he had not had a reply from the NFDC regarding them providing funding. Cllr Millar advised that there were two possible grants, capital and income. The income grant would not be available but the Council could investigate applying for the capital grant. Cllr Millar has not progressed this until the movement of the pitch is agreed. Cllr Millar suggested agreeing the pitch movement and then applying for the grant. There has also been £15k allocated by the NFDC to Fordingbridge (subject to an appeal) from a levelling up, development fund. Cllr Shering has relooked at the distance and the proposed route now avoids the Memorial Gardens. He will now look to firm up the likely cost. It was noted that the pitches could not be moved until the end of the season. Cllr White suggested that the Clerk could apply for the capital grant. Cllr Jackson felt that the Council could match the grant with CIL but Cllr Millar felt it would be a good use of the £15k grant. Cllrs agreed to meet at 9am on 30th September at

the Recreation Ground to review the proposed route of the path. Cllr Shering confirmed that two contractors had already agreed to price the work.

- **To consider a request to put up a sign promoting the Whippet Club**

The Clerk had circulated details of the proposed Whippet Club signage. He advised that the club had requested signs on posts close to the whippet track, one close to the path from the car park and one close to the footpath at the other end of the track. Cllrs discussed the club's request but given the work of the Recreation Ground working party and the proposed new path, Cllrs felt that one sign on the clubhouse would be better. Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Bailey and therefore RESOLVED: to allow the Whippet Club one sign attached to the clubhouse. All in favour.

- **To consider pool opening times**

Cllr Bailey felt the pool is currently opened too late and closed too early. The pool is currently opened on the second May bank holiday. Cllr Paton suggested opening the pool from 1st May to 30th September, which would tie in with the bathing water season. Cllr Shering raised the issue of the additional costs of an extended opening period as the pool has to be drained and refilled two or three times a week. Cllr Bailey said if the weather is as it is now then the pool could be closed, so the extended opening time should be subject to the weather at the Council's discretion. Cllr Bailey proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Millar and therefore RESOLVED: to adopt opening times from the beginning of May to the end of September. All in favour. Cllrs then discussed the opening of the car park and pedestrian access to the Recreation Ground using the memorial gates. Cllr Wilson advised that HCC had confirmed that there was an acceptable distance to allow the installation of railings and the Council was awaiting a cost for this from HCC. Cllr Bailey queried why the costing was taking so long as all the specifications are on HCC's website. He felt that the only hold up could be due to the services in the ground.

- **To consider the impact of a reduction in use of pitches**

The RFO had forwarded an email from the rugby club regarding a reduced use of the Recreation Ground due to a combination of using the all-weather pitch at Burgate School and fewer players meaning the club could not regularly field a second team. Cllr Millar said there had been a change of president and Cllr White said with the new president there might be an increase in membership and he felt that the new president would be keen to continue to use the Recreation Ground. Cllr Shering said if the pitches were moved to accommodate the proposed path then the current training area would be reduced in size. Cllr Millar felt that the email from the rugby club may just be a negotiating tactic. Cllrs discussed the setting of the block booking rate. The Clerk advised that it was set based on previous years usage and the charges agreed by Cllrs. The block booking meant that the club did not have to pay VAT of 20%. Cllr Millar suggested that the RFO report at the next Finance & Policy committee regarding the process of agreeing the charges. Cllr Paton suggested that it would be useful to have previous years figures by way of comparison.

6. To report any matters concerning Open Spaces

- **Jobs for the Lengthsman – 2nd October 2023**

Cllr Wilson suggested that any jobs should be sent to the office.

- **To consider planting hedging**

Cllr Wilson advised that last year funding had been obtained from CPRE towards the planting of hedging at the Recreation Ground. Further funding may be available so the Council could look at planting further hedging. Applications have to be submitted by 29th October. Cllrs discussed possibly planting hedging at the Parsonage Park open space,

Allenwater Drive and Queens Gardens. Cllrs were happy for Cllr Wilson to progress this. Cllr Wilson felt that hedging added value to the environment but dragons teeth might be required at Allenwater Drive. Cllr Wilson also reported on the official opening of the Community Orchard that was due to take place on 29th September and advised that the Council is looking to apply for an award from CPRE for the scheme.

7. To agree open spaces priorities in the short term

Cllrs discussed managing open spaces in the short term while a new Grounds Maintenance Operative was sought. Cllr Shering said he could provide resource if needed. Cllr Millar felt that this should be considered in the event that things were not done. Cllr Millar would advise where the school recruit from. Cllr Bailey felt that if needed the NFDC could assist with some of the open spaces as they already manage their own open spaces in the town.

8. To note any items of correspondence

No items of correspondence.

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

Nothing further to report.

10. To note the date of the next meeting as 18th October 2023

The meeting closed at 9:05pm.