

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 7.30pm
held at the Town Hall.**

(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Council)

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

In Attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk
Rachel Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Woods, New Forest District Council
Footpath Officer and representative of Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath
Society (RFFS).
1 representative from Fordingbridge Avon Bathing (FAB)
5 Members of the Public

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Perkins.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 6th
September 2023 and to report on any matters arising**

Cllr Millar reported an error in the minutes as his attendance not recorded, although he was present. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Wilson and therefore RESOLVED: that with the addition of Cllr Millar's name in the list of those present, the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 6th September 2023 are signed as a true record.

Matters arising

Agenda item 6 – Cllr White has created an initial new Business Continuity Plan for the town and given to the Clerk for consideration.

**4. To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary General Council meeting held in CLOSED
session on Thursday 14th September 2023 and to report on any matters arising**

This item was moved to the end of the meeting and held in closed session.

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

Cllr Woods said that members of the public had been in touch about the poor condition of the community noticeboards in Fordingbridge. Cllr Shering reported that the board outside I N Newman Funeral Directors will be replaced by the business. Cllr White said he would remove out-of-date or non-local posters once a week from the boards at Roundhill, the Co-op car park and I N Newman.

14. To consider an application for designated bathing water status

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Millar and therefore RESOLVED: that as landowner Fordingbridge Town Council consent to an application for designated bathing water status being made. 8 in favour, 1 against, 2 abstentions.

[The representative from Fordingbridge Avon Bathing (FAB) and 5 members of the public left the meeting.]

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

Current 90 days up to: 28/09/2023

Preceding 90 days up to: 28/09/2022

FORDINGBRIDGE

	Current R90	Previous R90	Difference
1b Violence with Injury	8	11	-3
1c Violence without Injury	20	26	-6
2a Rape	2	2	0
2b Other Sexual Offences	0	3	-3
4a1 Burglary Residential	9	5	4
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	2	2	0
4b Vehicle Offences	12	9	3
4d Bicycle Theft	2	0	2
4e Shoplifting	8	11	-3
4f All Other Theft Offences	19	12	7
5a Criminal Damage	17	14	3
6b Possession of Drugs	0	1	-1
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	2	2	0
8 Public Order Offences	11	16	-5
9 Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	1	3	-2
TOTAL	113	117	-4

	Current R90	Previous R90	Difference
Residential Burglary (Excl Sheds/Garages)	0	3	-3

Cllr Wilson questioned the accuracy of the reports, saying that the criminal damage to her shed at the allotments had been recorded as harassment. Cllr Shering volunteered to be the Council representative for Policing matters.

7. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor reported that during September he attended various events.

On the 13th September he visited the new residential home 'Chevrons Living' in Green Lane that is being made ready for retired veterans from the Armed Services. There will be an official opening on 21st October and an open invitation has been extended to FTC.

On the 15th September he attended a meeting with Councillor Wilson & the Avon Valley Church to get underway the plans for the lantern parade to lead the festivities at the light switch on in December.

On the 19th September he attended the AGM & presentation evening at Sandleheath Sea Scouts where he was honoured to present several prizes & awards. He said it was good to see a local group thriving & enjoying many successes both locally & abroad.

On the 21st September he was invited to the Fordingbridge 1993 Club dinner at the Old Beam. A great bunch of people & a nice event. The guest speaker was Paul Atterbury of Antiques Roadshow fame & also the inspiration behind his own Mother creating Andy Pandy back in the early 1950's – he gave a very interesting talk.

The Groundman's retirement from the Rec was marked on the 27th September with a small leaving party hosted at the Information Office and at which he was pleased to attend and present him with his leaving card & gifts.

The opening of the Community Orchard at Sweatford Meadows took place on the 29th September & he was very pleased to cut the ribbon. This really has been an all-round community-led achievement & the first joint working partnership between FTC & NFDC. Hopefully this will be enjoyed for many generations to come. The Mayor thanked Cllr Wilson for her hard work and commitment to this project.

On the 30th he attended a working group meeting to look at the proposals & way forward both for the planned 'Park Run' in Fordingbridge & for the future improvement of access & egress for everyone around our recreation ground through the new pathway which is hoped to be installed.

Also, this month he has met with local residents who were extremely angry & frustrated at the standard of work by Giganet & the mess left behind. He has shared this information with District Councillor Phil Woods who has taken this up, as well as an e-mail being sent on behalf of FTC to Giganet by the Town Clerk.

8. To receive a report from the County Councillor

County Councillor Edward Heron's report can be found in the appendix.

9. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Millar reported that he had attended the following events in September.

7th September – Avonway Open Day.

8th September – Opening of Hyde Community Hall. A £75k grant from Veolia paid for an accessible entrance and toilet block.

11th September – NFDC full Council meeting.

11th September – Met with a resident, the NFDC case officer and a tree officer regarding the trees at Dudley Road which are due to be felled. There is nothing NFDC can do.

15th September – Met with a local resident regarding hedge cutting in the cemetery.

21st September – Attended an NFDC Resources and Transformation meeting.

3rd October – Attended an NFDC Corporate Plan workshop.

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

- Staff and Remuneration Committee – 6th September 2023 – received Cllr Lewendon
- Planning Committee – 13th September 2023 – received Cllr Paton
- Amenities Committee – 20th September 2023 – received Cllr White
- General Purposes Committees – 20th September 2023 – received Cllr Hinton
- Finance and Policy Committee – 27th September 2023 – received Cllr Millar

11. To consider Footways in Fordingbridge

The footpath officer reported on the application to move Footpath 7 at Midgham Farm, saying that the landowner has cut down many more trees, removed signage from the steep hill and installed a new permissive sign. Cllr Wilson reported that HCC is putting pressure on FTC to withdraw their objection, saying that it will cost public funds.

The footpath officer reported that work is needed to the Avon Valley Path west from the A338; there are two oil drums on the path with slabs of concrete behind, and the trees and brambles need cutting back.

Cllr Wilson reported that a lady sustained severe facial injuries on 2nd October when she tripped over a poorly fitted drain cover on NFDC land to the rear of the Co-op. NFDC repaired the drain cover the following day.

12. To consider Highways in Fordingbridge

The Clerk reported that FTC's comments on the Access Strategy report have now been submitted. A follow up meeting with HCC is expected to be held later this month.

Cllr Bailey reported that the High Street would be resurfaced in Spring or Summer 2024.

13. To consider supporting / requesting CCTV installation throughout the town in conjunction with NFDC

The Clerk reported that the police would have access to the proposed CCTV cameras and the cameras would be constantly monitored. The cost to FTC would be an annual maintenance fee of £734 per camera. Although the system would pick up number plates, there would be no number plate recognition software involved. It is preferred that the cameras be mounted on poles rather than buildings. Cllr White said this would be good for the Burgate School students who have reported feeling unsafe at the Rec.

Cllr Hinton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED: to support / request the installation of 4 CCTV cameras throughout the town in conjunction with NFDC. All in favour.

15. To report on any Health & Safety issues

Cllr Bailey volunteered to take responsibility for health and safety matters and issues. On Tuesday he and the Clerk will carry out site visits to the play areas.

16. To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies and meetings attended

Cllr Jackson reported that Fordingbridge Rotary Club are willing to man the road closures for Remembrance Sunday and the Christmas Lights Switch On event.

Action: Asst Clerk to send Cllrs Bailey and Jackson a copy of the traffic management proposals for these events.

Cllr Wilson attended a Fordingbridge Events Group meeting. A theatre event will be held at the Town Hall, with 85% of takings going to performers and the remaining 15% to the Fordingbridge Events Group. The Events Group have paid the setup costs for this show. Members agreed that the Information Office could sell tickets. Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Wilson and therefore RESOLVED: to allow free use of the Town Hall for this event. 10 in favour, 1 abstention

Cllr Wilson attended the Bleak Hill liaison panel meeting on 29th September and reported that the Cemex application for minerals and waste extraction is likely to include Midgham Farm. A public consultation will be held on 16th October at Alderholt Village Hall and on 17th October at Fordingbridge Town Hall. There is also an online consultation from Wednesday 11th October – Wednesday 25th October 2023 at www.midghamfarm.consultationonline.co.uk

Cllr Hale attended the Fordingbridge Conservation Group AGM on 26th September.

Cllr Cameron attended the Verderer's Celebration evening on 19th September. She reported on a Higher-Level Stewardship Scheme Education Project for schoolchildren in the New Forest.

17. To note any items of correspondence

The Fordingbridge Rugby Club Board have asked permission to hold a firework event at the Recreation Ground on Saturday 4th November. They said they'd inform the Police & Fire Service and carry out a leaflet drop through the local letterboxes to let the residents know it is happening. Members gave permission for this event to go ahead.

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

Cllr Hinton reported that the framework for CIL expenditure was today approved by the NFDC Cabinet. FTC will be invited to a briefing session on the implications of this framework and the process for making bids.

Cllr White reported on the cost of printing banners to promote the town.

- Banner 2000x 800 with hems & eyelets £25.00 each + VAT
- Banner 1200 x 700 with hems & eyelets £20.00 each + VAT

Action: Clerk to establish with HCC the policy for hanging banners on railings and other street furniture.

19. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 1st November 2023.

The first part of this meeting closed at 9:13 p.m.

[Cllr Woods and the Footpath Officer left the meeting.]

Due to the confidential nature of the items to be discussed, the remainder of the meeting was held in closed session.

APPENDIX

Hampshire County Councillor Report Lyndhurst & Fordingbridge Division October 2023

Highways Information

Highway 'Space' Availability

I wanted to update you on some challenges that are impacting our work to repair the damage caused to our road network last winter and prepare for the coming winter.

In general, these works are progressing well and I hope you will have noticed activity ongoing around the area.

However, we are facing an unprecedented number of permit requests for works from utility companies which is impacting on the availability of road space and consequently may mean that our own highway repairs are not able to be delivered as quickly as we would like.

It is worth noting that, whilst the County Council is responsible for controlling road-space and coordinating roadworks as part of its statutory duty, it is not possible for us to prioritise HCC works over others as they need to demonstrate parity between all works promoters.

The attached maps illustrate the current volume of ongoing and planned works that are being coordinated by the HCC Streetworks team. These maps change on an hourly basis as new permits come in, works complete, or as contractors make changes to their dates / method of works. The maps include only works submitted under a permit and do not include planned events or incidents that also require coordination.

As you can see there are significant numbers of works planned and ongoing, finding the 'space' on the road to enable repairs is sometimes challenging, not least as that section of road might have utility works or, more likely, be used as a diversion route for works elsewhere.

The County as a Whole

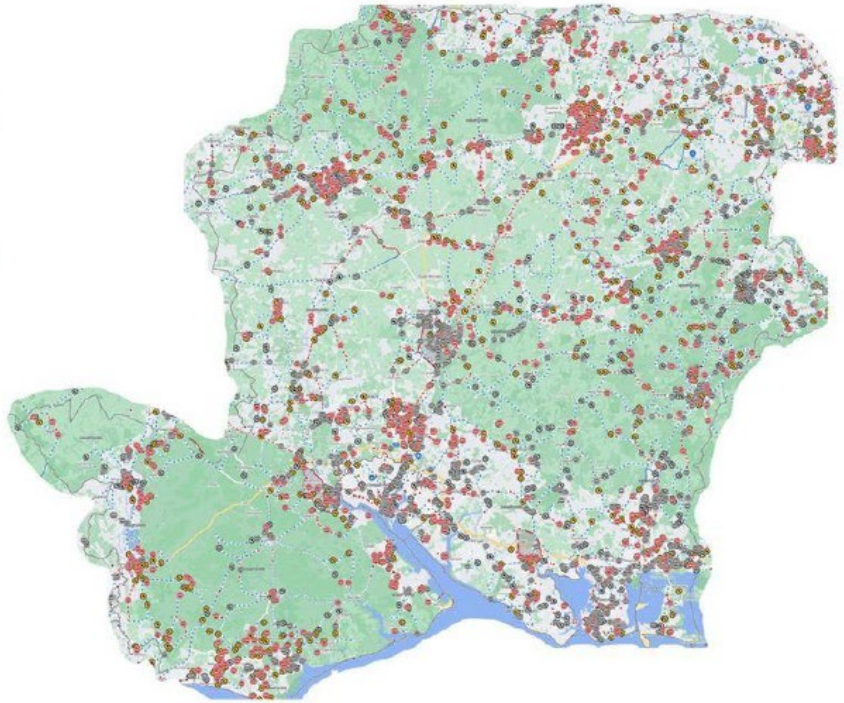
Each red circle is planned / ongoing works with a firm start date

Each grey circle is planned works with a 'vague' start date

Each dashed red line is a planned / ongoing road closure

Each dashed blue line is a planned / ongoing diversion route

Grey polygons are interdiction zones set up to discourage other works as a result of high impact planned works



Reporting Highway Problems

Links to report road issues are here:

Potholes: <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/potholes>

Tree/hedge problems:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/treehedge>

Flooding/drainage issues:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/flooding>

Pavement problems:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/paving>

Problems with rights of way:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/landplanningandenvironment/rightsofway/reportaproblem>

When reporting an issue, you'll be sent an email confirming a reference number for the report. If you would like me to follow this up for you then do please forward that message to me and I will chase for you

County Council Budget

You will no doubt have seen the publicity about Birmingham Council 'going bust' in the last few weeks. That's an example of how difficult it is for councils to make ends meet at the moment. Earlier this Summer I included detail of the consultation HCC was running asking Hampshire's residents how they felt we should manage their money in an ever-challenging financial environment.

Hampshire County Council has a legal responsibility to carry out certain functions. We cannot say 'no' if someone asks for support and in many cases we cannot means test or ask for a contribution toward the cost of providing a service. Examples of this are social care costs for older people, support for those with disabilities, the care of vulnerable children and young people and school transport for those who meet the necessary criteria. It's entirely right that we provide these services free of charge for those who need them. The consequence though is a cost that is only limited by the number of people requiring support.

Hampshire is unusual amongst local authorities in projecting our finances up to three years ahead, consequently, we can anticipate where the financial pressures will be. Our projections show that while we will be able to balance our budget for the next two years, by 2025/26 there will be an anticipated shortfall of £120million.

HCC therefore has to consider ways by which we can balance our budget before 2025/6. We very much hope that comes in the way of additional funding from the Government. But it may not, so consequently you will see in the next few weeks publicity about further consultations around the delivery of services.

The feedback from the Summer consultation told us that Hampshire's residents were supportive of service change, but notably opposed to service reduction. We have taken that on board and have prioritised those changes as part of our proposals upon which the County Council will now consult. This will include further internal reorganisation, increased charging for services and the sale of assets.

When a Council can no longer meet its costs, the Government send in Commissioners to run the Council and oversee its return to financial stability. This is what has happened to Birmingham this week. The Commissioner will look at every non statutory obligation and want to understand why the Council might still be operating in that way. Their view will be that the Council should only do that which it is legally obliged, and any other services should be cut.

For that reason Hampshire will also be looking at all non statutory services and reviewing whether they can be carried out differently or at all.

The area of the Council for which I am responsible has already seen reductions in our budget of £117 million in the last 10 years, this being before any reduction in purchasing power for inflation is taken into account. So, when we look at ways by which we can reduce our services, we are left looking at those remaining non statutory services. These include areas which many consider to be vital, and so I am clear that no stone will be left unturned in our review to find

ways by which we can keep service reductions to a minimum. Earlier this week we set out those proposals.

These include:

School Crossing Patrols - HCC do not have a legal duty to provide school crossing patrols. We do have a legal duty to ensure children can travel to school safely. We will therefore carry out a review of every crossing patrol location, reviewing if there is either the capital or developer funding to put safe crossings in place, or whether the continuation of the school crossing in that location is the most efficient way of continuing to undertake our duty to the county's school pupils.

Winter Gritting Routes - These have not been reviewed in many years, so we will be testing whether the current network is needed. The landscape of the County has changed. People now have more winter-resilient cars. There are different bus routes and also very different ways of working. A full review is needed.

Community Transport - There is no legal duty for the County Council to support community transport. However, we realise that where it exists community transport plays a vital role in combatting social isolation and enabling access to vital services. A full equalities assessment will be made of all of the support we give. We will assess whether, in cutting support for community transport, we are simply 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. Would the reduction of support to these services cost the Council significantly more elsewhere, by way of greater social care or school transport costs for example?

No one stands for election to oversee these kind of changes. We will continue to lobby the Government for greater support, we will relentlessly seek out efficiencies that do not affect our services and we will look for every opportunity to raise money so that service reductions can be avoided.

Lepe's Poppy Wave

Can you, or do you know anyone who might be able to, knit or crochet poppies to add to this year's Poppy Wave at Lepe Country Park please?



Social Care Proposals

HCC are not at the mid-point in our ten-week public consultation on proposals to transform the Local Authority's nursing and specialist care provision.

If you have not had an opportunity to provide your views yet, please do consider doing so by following this link to our dedicated web page where you will find further information and the response form. <https://www.hants.gov.uk/social-care-2023>

The consultation closes on 12 November.

I would also ask for your support in **sharing the consultation** within your local communities to encourage feedback from as many people as possible.

The consultation pack is available in a range of alternative formats, including other languages, as well as 'Easy Read', large print, audio or Braille. Anyone who may require this, is asked to email Hampshire County Council at: AS.Consultation@hants.gov.uk, or call: 0370 779 8102.

The proposals

To recap, a number of suggested changes have been put forward to the existing older adults service portfolio as part of a planned £173 million capital investment over the next five to six years. If pursued, this would enable us to transform and expand the future of nursing and specialist care accommodation directly provided by the Local Authority for the county's growing older population.

The proposals recommend concentrating on the delivery of specialist nursing care, complex dementia care and short-term support – to either prevent a hospital admission or support a hospital discharge. This would not only meet the needs of a growing number of older people in Hampshire in the longer term but would be care that could be provided more cost effectively by the Local Authority in-house.

Transforming in this way would involve the closure of some of the Authority's existing older care homes and a move away from the provision of long term residential care.

Next steps

No formal decisions will be taken in relation to any changes to the County Council's existing residential and nursing care homes before February 2024.

Members of a Working Group established from the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC), continue to oversee, and are actively engaged in the consultation process, advising on the approach and process.

Hampshire nets £1.8 million for 'Skills Bootcamps'

HCC have secured £1.8m from Government to offer Hampshire residents opportunities to access free, fast-track training to help them upskill and secure higher-paid jobs.

Anyone aged 19 years and over will be able to access employment and skills training for adults through new 'Skills Bootcamps' across the county, to be provided by specially commissioned Ofsted registered training providers.

The training aims to boost Hampshire's economy too, by helping businesses to fill specific skills shortage vacancies and so increase productivity.

The training will be developed in partnership with local employers and many of the excellent training providers already operating in Hampshire, ensuring a joined-up approach to addressing skills gaps and job vacancies across the county; as well as supporting the development of a workforce equipped with the skills to meet the needs of industry and business now and in the future.

Bootcamp courses will last up to 16 weeks and can be undertaken either online, on-the-job or at a training centre base.

We'll be publishing more details about the offer in Hampshire on the County Council's website later this autumn.

Tackling teen vaping

HCC Trading Standards officers have recently seized around 1,500 illegal vapes with an estimated value of £20,000 as part of our ongoing work to help prevent illegal and underage vape sales. Further investigations into this seizure are now underway.

Backing national calls to Government to tighten up laws around the marketing, availability and stricter regulation of vapes, we're sending out a strong message that selling vapes to children is unacceptable. Working with schools, we're helping to raise awareness of the risks of vaping nicotine products, while Trading Standards step up their checks on local premises who risk prosecution for underage sales and illegal vapes.

Concerns have also been raised with all Hampshire MPs on the supply of vapes to young people and the impact of disposable vapes on the environment. All types of vapes can be safely disposed of at our Household Waste Recycling Centres across Hampshire.

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