

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 24th April 2024 at 7:30pm
(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)**

Present: Cllrs Anstey, Cameron, Howard, Lewendon, Millar (arrived at 7.45pm) Paton, Shering and White (Chair)

In attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk
Martine Coatham, RFO

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies received from Cllrs Bailey, Hinton, Perkins and Wilson. Cllr Millar sent apologies as he would be arriving late to the meeting. In the absence of both the Chair and Deputy for the Finance Meeting, members agreed that Cllr White would chair the meeting.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest – Cllr White noted an interest in item 12 on the agenda and would not be involved in the discussions.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27th March 2024 and report any matters arising

Cllr Anstey proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 27th March 2024 be signed as a true record. All those that attended in favour. **Matters Arising** – none raised.

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

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

The monthly reports had been circulated – the RFO noted the major expenses that had to be settled this month and that the year end position will be an underspend of approximately £17k, the final figures will be known once all invoices for March have been received and VAT returns processed. The internal audit is scheduled to take place on 18th June.

Cllr Lewendon 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.

6. To consider grant applications under Section 137/CIL – none received

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

- **Staff Committee** – spine point increase for one member of staff (within contract) – approved by the Staff Committee and not challenged by the Finance & Policy Committee.

8. To receive an update on building matters

- The issue with the clock winder has now been resolved.
- Aish Pumps – the waste water pump requires repair at a cost of £2595: the item was discussed and it was noted that this has been a recommendation for several years. Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Shering to approve the repair. All in favour.
- Wallgate Units – the groundstaff had reported that the units were scaling up and needed servicing. The units were installed in 2015, serviced (not under contact) in 2021 at a cost of £192 per unit (there are 5 units). The cost per unit is now £689.47 (total £3447.35). A local plumber noted that he would not service the units and the Clerk had enquired whether NFDC held a contract with Wallgate offering a better rate. Discussion took place about considering replacing the units with a standard sink, soap dispenser and hand-dryer but there are concerns around the continued vandalism at the recreation ground – generally targeting the toilet block – locks being damaged, youth breaking the baby-change units by using them as seats and large amounts of debris (boxes, toilet paper and logs) being put in the toilet pans. This was taking place during the day (the toilets are locked overnight) and

some of those involved were in school uniform – this has been reported to the school. The Clerk had arranged to meet with the local PCSO to discuss this anti-social behaviour and this would be raised. Members suggested that Officers look into the provision of CCTV to cover this area to help identify and deter vandalism. The situation would be monitored and reported appropriately.

- To consider the quote from Barclay Phillips for Town Hall professional fees: the buildings manager (Tim Richards) had also provided a costing for the proposed works (excluding the roof repairs). Discussion took place around how the project would be funded (loans initially until other costs reduced following move) and how urgent the works were. There was some concern about the Stage 5 figure as this was open-ended. The Clerk to review with the buildings manager and report back to members.

9. To review the following policies and registers

- BBQs at Recreation Ground

It was noted that the BBQ stand had been removed from the recreation ground a few years ago and that the signage suggests that BBQs are only not permitted within the play area. Local policies regarding BBQs were noted (NFDC and NPA). It was agreed that the policy needs to be clear. Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Cameron and therefore RESOLVED: that BBQs are NOT permitted at the Recreation Ground. All in favour.

10. To approve continued membership/affiliation of HALC/NALC and ICCM

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Millar and therefore RESOLVED: to continue membership of HALC/NALC and ICCM. All in favour.

11. To consider the circular path at the Recreation Ground

The recreation ground working party had met prior to the meeting and reviewed the quotes for works. Discussion took place around consultation with residents and users, the proposed quotes (these are subject to change following measured surveys and other factors), use of Contracts Finder, and timescales of work. Cllrs agreed to put the work on Contracts Finder and Cllr Shering would send the Clerk the work specification.

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Cameron and therefore RESOLVED: that the preferred contractor was contacted initially to discuss the works and establish a timescale for the works. All in favour.

12. To re-consider the Ashford Sign

Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Cameron and therefore RESOLVED: to fund the second Ashford Sign. All in favour (Cllr White took no part in the discussion/decision).

13. To note any items of correspondence

- Letters of thanks were received from Westacre Residents, Fordingbridge Museum and Sandleheath Sea Scouts for the grants awarded last month.
- Cllr Howard noted that Fordingbridge Conservation Group had been in contact to discuss Bishops Pond – he would be meeting them to review the site.

14. To receive a report from the Clerk and any other relevant business – the Clerk noted that the business community would be contacted shortly asking everyone to ensure that the town was kept clean and tidy, this would be accompanied by the hanging basket information for 2024 – we are currently waiting for confirmation of price, installation costs and watering. Members agreed that the baskets were an asset to the town and every effort should be made to ensure that they are installed in 2024.

15. To note the date of the next meeting as 29th May 2024

The meeting ended at 8.45pm