

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 31st July 2024 at 7:30pm
(Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)**

Present: Cllrs Hinton, Howard, Lewendon, Millar (Chair), Paton, White and Wilson

In attendance: Paul Goddard, Town Clerk
Rachel Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Phil Woods, NFDC
3 representatives from the Avon Valley Shed

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Anstey, Perkins and Shering. The Chair welcomed Cllr Wilson back onto the Council.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest - none declared.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2024 and report any matters arising

Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hinton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th June 2024 be signed as a true record. All those that attended in favour.

Matters Arising

Agenda item 10 – The Chair asked that it be considered at the next Amenities and General Purposes Committee meeting whether a second front deck is needed and how to fund it.

Action: Clerk to add item to Amenities and General Purposes agenda

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

No matters raised.

9. To receive an update on building matters

Agenda item 9, part 1, was brought forward in the meeting.

- To agree the location/site for the construction of the Avon Valley Shed

The Clerk proposed siting the Avon Valley Shed as a stand-alone building immediately behind the Sports Club (allowing 1m between the two buildings) and in front of the Whippet track. The AVS would be 10m x 6.5m in size and can be built under permitted development rights. The AVS doors would be on the end closest to the Recreation Ground car park. The plan for the new circular path has been amended to allow the shed to be sited in this location. The Sports Club have been consulted and are happy with this proposal.

The Clerk reported that the Avon Valley Shed building would be owned by FTC and £10k of CIL has been allocated by the Town Council to this project. A peppercorn rent would be charged to the AVS.

A representative from the AVS reported that the building would have solar panels and an off-grid power supply, and the group's electricity needs would be very low. Hot drinks would be made in the Sports Club. The Clerk said that the two external pavilion toilets can be used by the group and the AVS said that anyone needing to use disabled toilets at the Kiosk would access them via the new circular path in the Recreation Ground.

Cllr White proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: to commit to the Avon Valley Shed as proposed by the Clerk. All in favour.

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

The monthly reports had been circulated by the RFO prior to the meeting. Members agreed to continue paying the Ofsted annual fee of £114 for the time being, as it would be more difficult to reinstate should FTC decide to run a playscheme again in the future.

Cllr Paton 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 receive a representation in relation to the procurement of play equipment

Cllr Wilson said she thought that little public consultation had been undertaken regarding the proposed new play equipment at the Rec and asked that members write to the Clerk to request that the decision be revisited in December, with the time until then used to carry out a public consultation. She said that no advice had been given on a procurement process and that there was no agreed evaluation criteria.

The Clerk advised that the following resolution was made by the Council in June:

“...to choose HAGS as the preferred contractor subject to confirmation of the warranty and change of the swing pole for a traditional seesaw.”

and that once a decision has been made by the Council the Council’s Standing Orders state: “A resolution shall not be reversed within **six months** except either by a special motion, which requires written notice by at least **three** councillors to be given to the Proper Officer in accordance with standing order 9, or by a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation of a committee or a sub-committee.”

The Clerk advised that purely in technical terms, the options are:

- The resolution stands
- Six months pass
- A special motion or a motion moved in pursuance of the recommendation is made to the Council.

Cllr Howard reminded members that consultation had been undertaken with the schools and advice sought from NFDC. Cllr Hinton advised that the decision was not unlawful and was not contrary to financial regulations. He said that should the Council wish to defer then it would be better to propose a motion to do so, rather than taking the route suggested by Cllr Wilson of doing so informally.

Cllr Millar advised that HAGS have confirmed the warranty and the change of the swing pole for a traditional seesaw. The revised quote from HAGS still needs approval from Council. No contract has yet been signed. Cllr Hinton advised that when the revised quote from HAGS is presented to the Council, the Council will vote to accept it or reject it and that would be the vehicle by which a decision is made.

7. To consider grant applications under Section 137/CIL

- Making Memories Matter
- Avon Valley Community Matters

Cllr Millar reported that neither organisation had fulfilled the criteria to supply the necessary information to assess the applications. Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: to defer these applications to the next Finance and Policy Committee meeting. All in favour.

8. To receive any Finance & Policy matters referred from sub-committees – none received

9. To receive an update on building matters

Agenda item 9, part 1: To agree the location/site for the construction of the Avon Valley Shed was discussed and agreed earlier in this meeting.

Circular Path

The Clerk reported that the construction of the new circular path at the Recreation Ground is underway. The work is being undertaken in two stages to mitigate the impact on the rugby and football clubs.

Town Hall

The Clerk reported that he had met with Cllrs Hinton and Shering and the Buildings' Manager to discuss the Town Hall proposals. The Buildings' Manager recommended two structural engineers, both of whom have been asked to quote.

Cllr Millar reported that the Town Hall clock has stopped working again and asked for an update at the next meeting.

10. To discuss and agree arrangement and organisation of Christmas Events 2024

- Date for lights switch on (29th November or 6th December)
- Date for Afternoon Tea (currently booked for 5th December)

Cllr White reported that the Fordingbridge Events Group will hold a wash-up meeting to discuss the summer festival and the way forwards on 10th September. He said that both FEG and Rotary have limited volunteers. Councillors agreed that they would prefer the lights switch on to be held on 29th November. Cllr Millar proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore **RESOLVED**: that Cllr White would liaise with local businesses and confirm to the Clerk the date of the Christmas event and the locations and times of road closures by mid-August, for the Clerk to submit the road closure application giving 3 months' notice as requested by NFDC. All in favour.

Action: Cllr White & The Clerk

Members agreed the date of Thursday 5th December for the Christmas afternoon tea in the Town Hall. Volunteers in the town are invited.

11. To note the revised bank charges

Lloyds Bank had notified the Council that the monthly fee on the current account will rise from £7 per month to £8.50 in October. Cash payments in will be £1.50 for every £100 in or out, cheques will be £1 for every cheque paid in or out. The RFO advised that the Council rarely receive cash or cheques, but this should be discouraged in the future, with bank payments/receipts the preferred option, with the SUMUP machine available for smaller purchases. This was noted by members.

Cllr Millar raised concern that cash and cheques were often used by the most vulnerable amongst the residents. The Clerk reassured him that this related to payments from businesses who could pay by BACS instead, that the RFO had to make a special trip to the bank in Ringwood each time and that the auditor had raised concern over large cash amounts.

12. To note the revised utility contracts for gas at the changing rooms and information office

The RFO had noted that the current contracts for these two supplies run to the end of September, Perfect Clarity (energy consultants) have provided quotes and as these fluctuate daily, the RFO and Clerk selected two-year contacts with Pozitive Energy which gave the best prices for the period (without switching to an unknown supplier to save a few pounds). The prices are lower than the Council are currently paying. This was noted by members.

13. To review the following policies and registers

- None

14. To note any items of correspondence

A letter of thanks for the grant received by Hope for Tomorrow was received and circulated to members.

15. To receive a report from the Clerk and any other relevant business

The NFDC has advised that Town Council's proportion of CIL for the period October 2023 to March 2024 was nil. For the current period from April 2024 the Town Council's proportion is currently £141,308.36, the majority of which has arisen from the Cala Homes Limited development.

16. To note the date of the next meeting as 28th August 2024

The meeting ended at 20.27.