

**Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday, 16th May 2012
at 8.30 pm in The Town Hall**

PRESENT:

Cllr. G. Wilson (Chairman)
Cllrs. Adams, Connolly, Hale, Shering & (A) Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Miss D Vine – Asst Clerk
Mr I Newman

1. To receive apologies for absence

There were apologies from Cllr Price.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

Cllr Adams declared an interest in a quote from MC Castle as he is a customer and would not vote.

Cllr Connolly entered the room

3. To report on any outstanding matters from the previous meeting of the 21st March 2012

Pavement Gritting – Cllr Connolly and the Clerk had met with HCC who had agreed that it would be a good idea to have local gritting arrangements in place and would provide salt and a gritting machine. HCC would synergise the resource and if our Groundsman were used payment would be made. Cllr Connolly commented on the positive sense of co-operation on the matter. It was AGREED to discuss the matter further at the Finance & Policy Meeting on the 30th May 2012 when further details would be known.

Council Chamber Refurbishment – M Castle had confirmed that work would begin w/c 21st May 2012.

Town Hall Noticeboard – This had been delivered.

Main Hall Floor – Cllr Adams confirmed the contractor had inspected the floor. The quote had not yet been received. Cllr Adams to chase.

Cleaning of Hall Frontage – Quotes still to be obtained.

Disabled Parking Spaces – A response had been received from NFDC confirming that disabled drivers were not restricted to short stay parking and could park in any of the bays provided they displayed their badge.

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

None received.

5. To report on Matters concerning St Mary's Closed Churchyard and Stuckton Road Cemetery

Mr Newman of I N Newman, Undertakers, advised that 2 Yew Trees were causing a problem in St Mary's Churchyard and whilst NFDC had done some work to them he believed further remedial work was required and would welcome the Council's support in getting this done. Cllr Connolly asked that this request be put in writing for consideration.

To consider the policy on reserving grave spaces

Cllr (G) Wilson advised that there had been recent problems in relation to grave marking, which had been caused in the main by reserved grave spaces. Mr Newman advised that the practice of reserving graves was largely being ended by Councils and that in the old section of the graveyard over 80 reserved spaces had never been used. Mr Newman recommended that Members give careful consideration to ending the practice of reserving grave spaces.

It was proposed by Cllr Wilson and seconded by Cllr Connolly that the Council should discuss a change in burial policy to end the practice of reserving grave spaces at the Finance & Policy Meeting on the 30th May 2012 . All in favour. Carried.

Mr Newman advised that some of the ground was proving unstable after a grave had been dug and in some instances there was insufficient room between the graves. He therefore recommended to members that once the graves had been marked, every other grave should be dug, allowing the ground to settle, and once the end of line had been reached the spaces left would then be used. Cllr (G) Wilson advised that it was of paramount importance that gravediggers follow the grave space indicated by the Clerk at the time of request. It had been agreed with the Clerk that all spaces would be marked clearly by Andy Lane. Cllr Adams felt that someone should attend to ensure the correct space is dug. Mr Newman further recommended that existing reserved spaces be marked with "R" and that where no headstone is erected after 12 months the grave should be marked accordingly.

Mr Newman also referred to the number of graves where regulations were not being enforced in relation to the amount of flowers/memorials on graves, and even the erection of cages over graves to prevent rabbits. This was causing a problem where graves now required levelling. It was confirmed that a contract was signed by representatives of the deceased agreeing to these conditions but it was felt by some Members that it was quite hard to enforce. There were also a number of areas between graves which were unlevel and the depressions needed filling.

Mr Newman also reported that under burial regulations the law required a member appointed by the Council must attend the burial to ensure the correct person was being buried. This could be delegated to the undertaker and as the majority of funerals were undertaken by the two funeral directors in the town.

It was proposed by Cllr (G) Wilson and seconded by Cllr (A) Wilson that the undertaker arranging the funeral would be responsible for ensuring that all matters were correct. All in favour. Carried.

Mr Newman asked that Members give consideration to putting NFDC on notice that should the land next door to Stuckton Road Cemetery become available, then the Council should register an interest. It was AGREED to take the matter to Finance & Policy on the 30th May 2012, as it is of material use to the community.

Cllr Connolly asked Mr Newman whether it would be possible research making good and using the footpath by the side of the Church to alleviate the problem of pedestrians using the road which is dangerous. Mr Newman was agreeable.

Mr Newman left the meeting

6. To report on matters relating to the Town Hall

Guttering Quotes – 3 Quotes had been received and considered by Members. It was proposed by Cllr (G) Wilson and seconded by Cllr Connolly that M Castle be awarded the contract for repairing the downpipes and replacing the existing soakaway to the rear of the Town Hall. Cllrs (A) Wilson and Shering in favour. Cllr Adams had declared an interest and therefore did not vote.

Obelisk & Jubilee Plaque

A letter had been received from the Fordingbridge Society requesting clarification of ownership of the Obelisk in the High Street. Cllr Adams believed it was owned by the Council but the Asst Clerk was trying to find out for certain. Members agreed that it should be added to the list of Council assets and placed on our insurance. Cllr Connolly reported that he was in discussion with Edgar Moss of the Fordingbridge Society in relation to the wording on the Jubilee Plaque and would report further at a later date.

7. To report on any matters concerning Footpaths

Footpath between Godshill and Fordingbridge – The outcome of the feasibility study was still awaited but in the meantime funding from the Small Grants Scheme was being sought.

8. To report any matters concerning Highways

Notification had been received of the proposed temporary closure of the Alderholt Road at Harbridge Drove for 9 days with effect from the 11th June 2012 in order to carry out mobile crane works. This would mean that HGV lorries from Cemex would have to access their site via Alderholt or Fordingbridge. Cemex were challenging this as they had not been notified!

9. To report any matters concerning Allotments

Wake up letters had been sent to three tenants who had not been tending their plots. Metal cagework left by NFDC secured to allotment fencing had now been removed.

10. To note any items of correspondence

None noted.

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

Nothing to report.

12. To note the date of the next meeting as the 18th July 2012.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm