

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 29th June 2016 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

Present: Cllr Connolly - Chairman

Cllrs Adams, Price, Hale, Perkins, Earth, Bailey, Fulford, Lewendon & Paton

In attendance: Mrs H Richards, Town Clerk (TC)
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer (RFO)

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Anstey & Wilson

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

Cllr Adams declared an interest in Agenda item 5, Monies collected & Payment of Accounts as a supplier to the Council – but remained in the meeting but did not speak or vote on this item.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 1st June 2016 and report any matters arising

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st June 2016 be signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

Minute No. 5 – Earlcote due to commence fencing works at the Memorial Gardens in July following confirmation from New Forest DC that Planning Permission is not required for the new pedestrian access. The Finance Officer advised that a separate quote for the Car Park enhancement works had been received from Earlcote which would be reported to the Amenities Committee in July.

Minute No. 18 – A meeting would be held in July with Ian Newman to discuss Christmas preparations and the Finance Officer stressed that in line with the Transparency Code the contract for the Christmas Lights must go out to tender using the Contract Finder procedure.

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

No members of the public present.

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

The Finance Officer summarised the accounts for June and confirmed that the Grant towards the Summer Play scheme 2016 had been received from NFDC but as yet, not from Hampshire CC. The Whippets camping fee had been received together with half of their annual race fees.

With regard to the hanging baskets, the RFO advised that while last year was the first year of the Council carrying out the financial administration of the scheme (invoicing and payments) the invoice for watering (last year) was not received until this financial year and therefore showed in this year's accounts.

Grounds maintenance works have been completed at the Recreation Ground by Ringwood Town Council, however clarification is needed of who is paying for which element.

The ongoing issue with British Telecom (BT) regarding bills relating to the Information Office has been partially resolved with the Council receiving a credit for the late payment charges incurred – BT have yet to resolve invoicing for broadband. A query was raised regarding the cost of the phone at the workshop – the RFO advised that while the Groundsmen do make calls on this line, charges mainly relate to line rental.

With regards to Budgets, the RFO advised that an invoice has been raised for payment of the Lengthsman scheme funding from HCC, however payment has not yet been received.

Hire charges for Youth meetings held at Avonway have not been invoiced since funds were transferred to the Town Council – Avonway to raise invoice to Town Council. It was suggested that these meetings could be held at the Town Hall.

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

Nothing referred to Finance & Policy this month.

7. To consider the following Grant Applications

No grant applications.

8. To review the Asset Register

The RFO presented the amended Asset Register following recommendation from the Internal Auditor that extra columns are added to give a clearer understanding – values do not show depreciation and figures shown are cost values.

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the Asset Register as presented is adopted.

All in favour

9. To receive and consider recommendations made in the Internal & External Audit.

Internal Audit

- Precept figures - minuted differently in Finance & Policy and General Council minutes – one shows including grant monies from NFDC and the other does not. Note only for future minutes.
- Earmarked Reserves – Long standing reserves need to be reviewed and put those no longer relevant back into General Reserves. Members considered the following reserved funds:
Good Citizens Award – Transfer to General Reserves
Bishops Pond – Developer funds given for works – should remain as earmarked funds as ongoing requirement for works to be carried out.

Cllr Perkins proposed and Cllr Paton seconded and it was therefore **RESOLVED**: that the adjustments above to the earmarked funds be carried out. All in favour.

- VAT – ongoing issue with sports clubs regarding block booking or annual licence and also donations received relating to the Town Hall.
- Petty Cash - Play scheme Float, accountancy error.
- Need to have year-end confirmation
- Staff Contracts – Need to be sorted and consistent. RFO recommended employment of Human Resource company to advise – members agreed that RFO & TC to obtain quotes.
- Lengthsman – accounts reconciliation needs to be carried out on a more regular basis (monthly)

External Audit

The RFO reported that the internal auditor has inadvertently retained the Report which is due to be sent back to the Auditors (External) – all associated accompanying paperwork has been prepared.

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Adams and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the Chairman be given authority to sign the report once received from the Internal Auditor.

All in favour.

10. To note any items of correspondence

The Clerk reported on the following items of correspondence:

Fordingbridge & District Lunch Club for the Frail & Housebound & Rae Straton Lunch Club – letter of thanks for the grants awarded to the clubs.

Hyde Band – Letter of thanks for the contribution paid to them for their performance in the Queens 90th Birthday celebrations.

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

Clerk nothing further to report.

The Chairman advised members that he had been notified that the former Fordingbridge Club premises have been sold to a developer – a planning application would be submitted for residential properties together with a smaller retail unit (not supermarket).

The Chairman also reported that the Council had received notification from NFDC of the Local Plan Review, consultation for which commences on the 15th July and runs until 16th September. The Plan proposes housing allocation to the north-west of the Town of 380 houses off of Whitsbury Road and a further 100 in the “green gap” to the East of Ashford (Station Road). The Town Council were not consulted prior to the proposed allocations. The Chairman raised concerns over the traffic impact on the Town Centre and advised that the following day he would be attending a Neighbourhood Planning event with the Town Clerk and Cllr Fulford hosted jointly by New Forest DC and the National Park Authority. Cllr Connolly stressed that the Town Council must respond fully to this consultation and urged Members to submit comments.

9. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 27th July 2016.

The Finance Officer advised that she would not be present at this meeting.

The meeting closed at 8.38pm