

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Tuesday 27th November 2012 at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall Council, Fordingbridge

Present:

Cllr Adams – Chairman

Cllrs Anstey, Connolly, Fulford, Lewendon, Hale, Paton, Perkins, Price, (A) Wilson & (G) Wilson

In attendance:

Ms K Mason, Town Clerk

Martine Coatham, Finance Officer.

1. To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Shering

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

Cllr Adams declared an interest in agenda item 5, Payments of accounts.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 30th October 2012 and report on any matters arising

It was proposed by Cllr Adams and seconded by Cllr Connolly that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2012 be signed as a true record. All in favour, Carried.

There were no matters arising.

It was AGREED to ask the window cleaner to twice yearly clean the inside of the Town Hall windows

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

No members of the public present.

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

It was proposed by Cllr Adams and seconded by Cllr Connolly that the monies collected and accounts be approved and paid. All in favour, Carried.

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

Nothing referred.

7. To consider the following grant applications

Life Education Wessex – As there was now no more money left in the Section 137 grant budget it was AGREED to defer this grant application until the April 2013 meeting.

8. To discuss the proposed Concession building.

Members AGREED that the current suggested position in the Memorial Gardens was the wrong place as this should be left as a Memorial Garden. The concession part of the building needed to be half as big again to allow for flexibility in catering.

Following discussion it was AGREED that the building should be placed on the site of the petanque court and the wooden fence by the Memorial Gates and the Memorial Garden hedge be removed making the children's play area extend into the rose garden. A fence (or hedge) to be placed by the Workshop enclosing the area.

The Clerk to advise Michael Weakley and request new drawings be made.

9. To discuss arrangements for Committees and terms of reference

After discussion members AGREED to write a Forward Plan for the Council and following that base the budget upon it.

It was AGREED to discuss the basis for the Forward Plan and a Vision statement at General Council on 5th December. The meetings of the Amenities Committee on 6th December and the General Purposes Committee on 13th December would concentrate on their part of the Forward plan and a further meeting of Council would then tie the plan together. After this had been adopted then budgets could be discussed and set.

The following changes to terms of reference of Committee were AGREED:
(added words in italics)

General Purposes Committee

13. Minutes of all meetings are to be kept by the Clerk and forwarded by e-mail or mail to members of the Town Council. *Any budget spend or significant changes to budgets must be minuted. Minutes of meetings will be presented to the next meeting of full council.*

Amenities Committee

14. Minutes of all meetings are to be kept by the Clerk and forwarded by e-mail or mail to members of the Town Council. *Any budget spend or significant changes to budgets must be minuted. Minutes of meetings will be presented to the next meeting of full council.*

Planning Committee

5. • consider all planning applications, tree work applications and licensing applications pertaining to Fordingbridge Parish and to ~~respond~~ *make recommendation* to New Forest District Council or the New Forest National Park Authority as the planning and licensing authorities.

Staff & Remuneration Committee

1. The Staff & Remuneration Committee is constituted as a Standing Committee of Fordingbridge Town Council. The Committee composition shall comprise of ~~four~~ *two Councillors, the Council Chairman and Vice Chairman* as voting members with three members of the Committee constituting a quorum.

7. The matters on which this Committee shall make decisions are:

- ~~Staff Salaries~~
- Staff Grievance matters
- Staff Disciplinary
- Staff training
- Staff Appraisals
- Recruitment of staff
- Dismissal of staff
- Staff contracts and job descriptions
- ~~Staffing quotas~~
- Annual review of staff related policies

8. *Decisions concerning Staff Salaries, Pensions and Staff quotas shall be made as a recommendation to the Finance & Policy Committee.*

Finance & Policy Committee

6. Under section 101 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Fordingbridge Town Council has delegated its statutory powers and functions to this committee for the municipal year 2012/13 to make decisions regarding;

Chairman

- Any policies, with the exception of staff policies, affecting this Council to be set up/ reviewed/ amended.
- Financial regulation and control of Council finances including payment of accounts & receipts of payment, banking, budgets, reserves and grant payments, *staff salaries, pensions and staff quotas*

10. To adopt the changes to the Council's Complaint's Procedure

The following changes to the Council's Complaints procedure were proposed by Cllr Adams and seconded by Cllr Lewendon. All in favour, Carried. [additions to the policy in italics]

7. What if I have a complaint about the behaviour of a particular Councillor (or Councillors)?

~~Councillors are obliged to observe a "Code of Conduct". If a member of the public feels a councillor has broken any of the rules of the Code of Conduct, they can complain to the Standards Board for England. This is an independent body responsible for promoting high ethical standards and investigating allegations that councillors' behaviour may have fallen short of the required standards. The Standards Board will consider the complaint and may carry out an investigation (or arrange for someone to do so).~~

~~The Standards Board for England can be contacted at: 1st Floor, Cottons Centre, Cottons Lane, London SE1 2QG — E-mail: enquiries@standardsboard.co.uk or Website: www.standardsboard.co.uk~~

By law, all Members and co-opted Members are required to follow a Code of Conduct when acting in their capacity as a Member. A Code of Conduct has been adopted by the Town Council which can be found on our website or upon request to the Town Council Office. The Code allows the Town Council to fulfil its obligations under section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 and is consistent with the following principles of public life as set out in the Act:

SELFLESSNESS - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits.

INTEGRITY - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

OBJECTIVITY - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

ACCOUNTABILITY - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

OPENNESS – Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

HONESTY - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

LEADERSHIP - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

New Forest District Council are the authority which deal with complaints against Councillors and has adopted procedures for dealing with those complaints. If a member of the public feels a councillor has broken any of the rules of the Code of Conduct, they can complain to the Monitoring Officer at New Forest District Council who will investigate the allegation that councillors' behaviour may have fallen short of the required standards.

The Monitoring Officer can be contacted at New Forest District Council, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, SO43 7PA, Tel 02380 285000.

11. To note any items of Correspondence

Nothing to report

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

Local Council tax base – the Government have announced that the council tax base for local preceptors will take account of local council tax support reductions. NFDC have pledged to work with Town & Parish Councils and will announce their arrangements in December.

13. To note the date of the next meeting as Tuesday 25th January 2013.

The meeting then went into closed session and the public and press were excluded.

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.