

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Council Meeting held at 7.30pm on Wednesday 1st October 2014 in the Town Hall

Present:

Cllr Connolly – Chairman
Cllrs Fulford, (G) Wilson, (A) Wilson, Earth, Hale, Anstey, Perkins, Lewendon, Price and Adams

In Attendance:

Mrs H Richards, Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham – Finance Officer
Cllrs Sevier & Bellows, New Forest DC
PC Deniz
2 Members of the Public

1. Apologies

There were apologies for absence from Cllr E Heron, Hampshire CC.

2. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest received.

3. To confirm the Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd September 2014 and to report on any matters arising.

It was proposed by Cllr Hale and seconded by Cllr Anstey and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2014 be signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

Minute No 3 – Lifebuoy Recreation Ground – The Clerk confirmed that the new lifebuoy purchased does not fit the existing housing. A further replacement (older style and size) has now been ordered and is due to be delivered next week.

Minute No 3 – Overgrown Hedges – Fryern Court Road – Still require action from landowners or Hampshire Highways. Clerk to chase.

Minute No 4 – Memorial Gardens and Gates – The Chairman reported that the Clerk had sought quotes for the cleaning of the Memorial Stonework and the Groundsman has been asked to replant the adjacent borders.

Minute No. 8 – Old toilet Block, Recreation Ground – Following discussion at Amenities Committee Meeting on 17th September 2014, Cllr Connolly has responded to Cllr Heron with regard to seeking funding for the costs involved in decommissioning and conversion of the toilet block.

Minute No. 12 – Fly the flag for the Commonwealth day 2015 – the clerk confirmed that investigation was ongoing to establish if the flag pole at the Town Hall could suspend such a large flag (or alternatively a smaller flag could be purchased and displayed).

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

Two matters were raised, which both concerned Planning issues – the Chairman advised the meeting that these would be discussed at the Planning Meeting on Wednesday 8th October 2014.

However, District Cllr Sevier updated the meeting on the issues raised as follows:

Touring Caravan situated on land at Marl Lane & subject to Enforcement Action – the final letter has been sent to the owner requesting removal, if no response is received following the statutory period, New Forest DC will have the caravan removed.

Sequoia Farm 2 new applications which have not yet been determined, proposal to present these to NFDC Planning Committee in November or December. Cllr (A) Wilson advised the meeting that the Quail House (subject of undetermined Planning Application) had been delivered on-site but not yet erected.

Members of the Public are concerned that people that have made previous representations are losing enthusiasm as no apparent action is being evidenced on-site. It was suggested that perhaps the local MP, Desmond Swayne should be contacted for advice and support. Cllr Fulford advised that it is important to make representations on all new applications, as each application is considered on its own merits and comments submitted on previous applications are not transferred.

Members of the Public left the meeting

5. To receive a report on any matters under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act

PC Deniz reported on damage being caused to the roof of both the Pavilion and Old toilet Block at the Recreation Ground. The tenant of the Concession Kiosk had also reported that damage had been made to one of his advertising banners. PC Deniz advised the meeting that the repeated extensions of opening hours applied for by Harleys was being monitored and requested that any problems were reported to the Police.

With regard to the Old Toilet block, PC reported that he had spoken with Jan McCarthy regarding the It's Your Choice Youth Group potential use of the building – the Chairman advised of the ongoing discussions with New Forest DC. The Police Station in Shaftesbury Street had closed on 30th September 2014, however the move to the former NFDC office at Provost Street was delayed due to IT issues – it was hoped that the new station would be open in 10 days.

Cllr Adams reported that a child's bicycle (with a helmet) had been abandoned at the rear of his premises in Salisbury Street and despite reporting it to the local police, there appeared to be no interest – the bike has subsequently been removed. PC Deniz advised that when such reports are received, checks are made to establish if the bike has been reported as stolen. Difficulty arises if it has not, as the nearest store for items found is at Eastleigh. Cllr Perkins queried whether there is a list available of bicycles reported stolen and whether he could check bikes that are taken into his business to see if they are stolen. PC Deniz reported that this information is held on a computerised system but would investigate to see if a list could be printed.

Cllr (G) Wilson raised concern regarding speeding vehicles in the High Street – PC Deniz responded and advised that attempts would be made for a more regular presence in this area.

PC Deniz left the meeting.

6. To receive a Report from the Mayor

Nothing to report

7. To receive a Report from the County Councillor

Not present at the meeting and no written report received.

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Sevier reassured Members that the while the cost for defending the Planning issues at Marl Lane and Puddleslosh Lane is escalating, New Forest DC have funding in place to cover this. Cllr Perkins questioned whether New Forest DC could get any of the money back and Cllr Sevier responded by advising that this could be achieved if the Appeal was dismissed and following an application for costs by NFDC, the Planning Inspectorate granted an award. Similarly, if the Appeal were to be allowed, the Appellant could apply for costs.

Cllr (A) Wilson queried whether the occupier of the Tent in an adjacent field was known (thought to have been in position and occupied for longer than 28 days) – Cllr Sevier undertook to ascertain if the Planning Office are aware of this.

Cllr Bellows reported on the recent visit to Sandleheath of Travellers and how this had been dealt with – local Parish Councils are to work together to plan for future occurrences.

Cllr Bellows advised that she would check with officers regarding required maintenance to trees at Sweatsfords Water. The recent report that the Information Office was incorrectly positioned on Forest Map was being rectified.

Cllr (G) Wilson queried whether the silt and weeds could be removed from Sweatsford Water near to the Allotments and Green Lane. Cllr Perkins advised that the Environment Agency were aware of the problem.

Cllr Lewendon queried if NFDC is responsible for the Old Railway path and concern over the overgrowth – this should be directed to Ruth Croker.

Cllr Perkins queried whether more patrols would be made by Dog Wardens in an attempt to reduce or prevent dog fouling in the Town.

Cllr (A) Wilson requested that the Planning Notice relating to the Planning Application for a Quail House at Sequoia Farm could be replaced as it had been removed. – Cllr Sevier to report back to officers.

Cllrs Sevier and Bellows left the meeting.

9. To receive the following Committee meeting minutes and any recommendations to General Council contained therein.

- Planning Committee – 10th September 2014
- Amenities & General Purposes – 17th September 2014 – MUGA to be discussed under Agenda item 10
- Finance & Policy Committee – 24th September 2014 – Media Policy still ongoing

10. To discuss the use of Developer Contributions

Cllr Connolly advised Members that he would not speak or vote on the issue of the MUGA apart from to inform Members that the MUGA had originally been proposed to attract new activities and possibly sports clubs to the Recreation Ground. Following a recent meeting with the Sports Club to discuss funding for the new Sports Facility, a request was made for the Developer Contribution monies allocated for the provision of the MUGA, to be re-allocated to the Sports Facility project – this was rejected by Members at the Amenities Committee meeting on 17th September 2014.

The Finance Officer advised Members that a decision is needed as there has been no other commitment for the MUGA and the Pavilion needs replacing. She advised that grants may be available towards the provision of the MUGA or that this could be put forward as a bid for CIL monies in the future. Grants from organisations and companies such as Veiola could not be submitted for the Sports Facility as the project cost was too high.

Members discussed that a lot of effort had already been made towards the provision of the Sports Facility and the opportunity should not be lost due to lack of funding. It was agreed that the MUGA project should still go ahead as this will encourage a variety of activities, however it is essential that other facilities are provided first.

Cllr Connolly advised the meeting that a meeting was arranged with New Forest District Councillors tomorrow (2nd October) to discuss the Sports facility and funding. Cllr Fulford queried why a meeting had not taken place with D Brunton, NFDC to discuss the replacement of Developer Contributions with Community Infrastructure Levy and how this would operate. The Clerk reported that it had not been possible within the time frame available.

Cllr Anstey proposed and Cllr Perkins seconded and it was therefore resolved to transfer the money allocated for the MUGA provision to the new Sports Facility Project. Cllr Connolly abstained from voting, all other members voted in favour.

Members then discussed the current allocation of Developer Contributions. The Finance Officer highlighted the following bids to be put forward for unallocated funds.

Open Space £2336.50 unallocated – bid for allocation to Sports facility or landscaping of the Memorial Gardens following the building of the kiosk.

Transport - £4,10565 allocated for Journey Planning Kiosk – project cancelled, funds to be re-allocated. £14,158.04 unallocated. Bids to be put forward for St Marys footpath, provision of Bike Racks at the Recreation Ground and the replacement of a bus shelter or improvement works at the bus stop at Burgate Cross – Members also queried if money available from NPA for bike racks following cancellation of the cycling scheme. Cllr Fulford reported that Highway works were being carried out in Church Street.

Car Parking £5,520.34 unallocated – bid for replacement car parking at Recreation Ground

The Clerk & Finance Officer to respond to New Forest District Council with bids by 3rd October 2014.

11. To report on any Health and Safety Matters

Nothing to report from Cllr Anstey.

The chairman requested volunteers for marshalling duties at the Remembrance Parade on Sunday 9th November 2014 – it is an essential Health and Safety requirement that marshals are provided.

Cllr (A) Wilson reported that following the replacement of street lights in Station Road, from Victoria Road to the Augustus John Pub, the area is very dark and poor visibility is provided at night as the new lights, which are taller are hidden in the trees. Town Clerk to report to PFI Project Manager and Hampshire Highways.

12. To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies and meetings attended

Twinning Association - Cllr (G) Wilson reported that The Mayor would be attending events in France during October.

Avonway Community Association – Cllr (A) Wilson reported that Avonway may be taking over publication of “The Gate”.

Fordingbridge Conservation Volunteers – Cllr Hale reported that due to the low water levels at Bishops Pond in order to fill the pond, works would be required to dig out and/or line the pond – the Group are looking at the costs involved.

Whitsbury Road – The Group are no longer able to maintain this area and control the weed growth and ideas for the area's future were being sought; level and grass over or make into wildflower area.

Sports Clubs – Cllr Anstey reported on meetings with the Rugby Club and Sports Club and correspondence received from the Turks Football Club regarding Goal posts and repositioning of the pitches. Correspondence was ongoing with the Whippet Club and another Whippet Racing Club.

Flooding/Environment Agency – Cllr Perkins advised Members that on Monday 29th September, the Environment Agency had removed the gravel island which had been located by the Bridge in the River Avon, this had been deposited on the faster flowing side of the River in order that it will wash down-river; it is hoped that this will increase fish breeding in the area. .

12 (b) To note any items of correspondence

No items of correspondence.

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

Nothing to report from the Clerk.

Member attendance at Committee Meetings - The Chairman advised Members of the previous resolution for all Members to receive all Minutes. Furthermore, all Members are entitled to attend any Committee (regardless of Committee membership) but non-Committee Members only have the same rights to speak as members of the public – matters can be raised under Matters raised by Members of the Public or non-Committee Members may speak with the prior consent of or at the request by the Chairman. Any changes to this policy must be placed on the Agenda for discussion by the Finance and Policy Committee and a resolution made for any changes.

Members discussed this matter and concerns were raised that minutes of the Staff and Remuneration Committee were not circulated to all Members prior to meetings due to their confidential content (hardcopies only distributed at subsequent General Council meeting). It was also raised that Members of the Public are prohibited from attending Staff and Remuneration Committee meetings and therefore non-Committee members should also be excluded. Concern was also raised that Minutes are not presented to General Council by the relevant Chairman and decisions are made which all Members should be involved in as this could affect other areas of the Council.

Cllr Perkins reported that he had ascertained the ownership of the larger island in the river and requested that works are carried out to the Trees which are overgrowing (or fallen) into the river

The Chairman reported that he would be unable to attend the visit to Belgium, planned for the 10th – 12th November 2014 to participate in WW1 commemoration events and to receive a helmet which had belonged to a former Fordingbridge resident Col. Clementi and which the family had agreed could be displayed at the Fordingbridge Museum. Cllr Connolly invited any Member to attend in his place.

14. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 5th November 2014.

The meeting closed at 8.57pm