

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 30th May 2012 at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall Council Chamber, Fordingbridge

Present:

Cllr Adams – Chairman

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

In attendance:

Ms K Mason, Town Clerk

Deborah Gordon, Finance Officer

Mrs D Douglas (PTA Grant application).

1. To accept apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Price & Shering.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

There was declarations of interest received from Cllr Adams for payment of accounts.

3. To report any matters arising from the minutes of the meeting held on the 25th April 2012

Fordingbridge Junior School PTA – Cllr Fulford reiterated her concerns about the debate surrounding this application at the previous meeting. She considered there was a lack of understanding of the purpose of the project as an activity to develop social skills. Members were expressing their likes and dislikes about the project which was not appropriate or necessary to determine the application. There was also a lack of consistency in the decision making on this application and previous grant applications. She welcomed the proposed grant policy, to be discussed later in this meeting, which would provide a framework on which to base future decisions.

The Chairman advised that the application would be discussed later in the meeting when other grant applications were considered.

NFDC Diamond Nomination – It was AGREED that the Council nominate Rosie Wilcox, Manager of the Bridges Children's Centre, Fordingbridge.

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

Cllr Adams declared an interest but remained in the room.

Monies collected and Payments of accounts were noted by members.

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

Amenities Committee – Section 106 monies – Cllr Connolly advised he was consulting Cllr Edward Heron about the £24,000 allocated for the provision of a single screen journey planning kiosk to be positioned in the High Street. He will report back to members.

General Purposes – pavement gritting – Cllr Connolly advised that Colin Read of NFDC has arranged for grit bins to be placed about the town and that further arrangements were being made for Town Council staff to help with pavement gritting in the winter months.

General Purposes – Stuckton Cemetery grave policies – at the General Purposes Committee meeting on 16th May two recommendations had been made to Finance & Policy Committee:

- Graves be dug every other space

- that the practice of reserving and purchasing of grave spaces should end.

Cllr (G) Wilson explained that due to the gravel based soil, when being dug graves often caved in exposing the adjoining grave. Digging every other grave space and waiting until a grave had settled before digging next to it would resolve the problem.

It was AGREED to allocate every other grave space.

Cllr (G) Wilson explained that the practice of allowing the purchase of a right of burial and reserving grave spaces had been stopped by NFDC and Salisbury DC as it was a waste of space if not used, there was additional administration needed to keep records and it could cause immense difficulties if a space was mistakenly used. Currently there are in excess of 80 un-used grave spaces in the 'old' part of the cemetery.

Cllr Adams was concerned that people would still wish to reserve a space and families might wish to be buried together. Cllr (G) Wilson advised that future graves would be dug at double depth to allow for a loved one to also be placed in it at a later date.

It was proposed by Cllr (G) Wilson and seconded by Cllr Hale that Fordingbridge Town Council cease to allow grave spaces to be reserved or purchased. Cllr Adams against, all other members in favour. Carried.

6. To consider a Section 137 grant application policy

Members considered a grant policy to apply to all Section 137 grants given by the Town Council.

It was proposed by Cllr Connolly and seconded by Cllr Adams that the policy be adopted. All in favour, Carried.

To consider the following grant applications:

7. To consider the following grant applications

Fordingbridge Junior School PTA – Mrs Debbie Douglas, Chair of the Fordingbridge Junior School PTA gave a presentation on what the project was about and how the carving of the friendship 'bench' would improve behaviour, teach respect for other people and property and help teach relationships and social skills. Just under £2000 had already been raised and it was hoped to complete the project by Christmas.

It was proposed by Cllr Fulford and seconded by Cllr Connolly that a grant of £350 be awarded. Cllrs Fulford, Connolly & Anstey for, all others against. Proposal not carried.

It was proposed by Cllr Hale and seconded by Cllr Paton that a grant of £250 be awarded. Cllr Lewendon against, all other members in favour, Carried.

Mrs Douglas left the meeting.

Cllr Perkins entered the meeting.

It was agreed to defer making a decision on the following applications until the next meeting as members had not had sight of the papers:

- Victim Support, New Forest
- 1st Sandleheath Sea Scouts
- The Rae Stratton Luncheon Club/Day Care

8. To conduct a review of Terms of Reference of Committees and Council Committee reporting structure and to consider setting up two new sub-committees: Disabled Access and Traffic & Access

Council Committee Reporting Structure – the Town Clerk explained that a Council can arrange to have any of its functions (except the issuing of the precept) exercised by a Committee which in turn can arrange for them to be exercised by a sub-committee (Local Government Act 1972, Section 101).

This means that any resolution taken by a Committee shall stand and does not need to be ratified by any other Committee or full council.

Minutes of a Committee meeting will be included on the agenda of the next General Council meeting following that Committee meeting and shall include any recommendations made to General Council.

At General Council these minutes will be received together with any recommendations made by that Committee. This shall be minuted. The Committee minutes are only received and NOT ratified. That can only happen at the next meeting of the Committee.

If General Council members do not approve a recommendation made then they shall receive the minutes but minute that they do not approve the recommendation and send it back to the Committee for further debate.

If General Council members do not approve a resolution made by a Committee then they shall receive the minutes but minute that they do not approve the resolution and send it back to the Committee for further debate with the additional information which is necessary to revisit a resolution (under Standing Orders) for further debate.

A members who is not a member of a Committee or Sub-Committee may attend a meeting of that Committee or Sub-Committee. At the invitation of the Chairman he may speak, but not vote, on any item of business discussed at that meeting.

Minutes and agenda of all meetings shall be sent to all members.

Terms of Reference for each Committee were discussed together with the recommended changes reflecting the Committee reporting structure. The Terms of Reference for each Committee were AGREED.

Disabled Access and Traffic & Access Sub-Committees – Cllr Connolly asked if these could be deferred until a later date in order to write the terms of reference for the members consideration.

9. To consider the District Council proposals for a new Standards Regime under the Localism Act 2011.

Under the Localism Act 2011 the current statutory standards regime, including Standards for England, statutory local Standards Committee, a prescribed form of Code of Conduct and prescribed procedures for dealing with complaints about members will be abolished. Individual councils will be responsible for adopting their own Code of Conduct. District Councils will be responsible for arrangements for dealing with complaints against parish and town councillors within their district.

Members discussed the draft proposals for a new Standards Regime under the Localism Act 2011 as suggested by NFDC. This will be adopted by NFDC in mid-June and implemented from 1st July 2012. Members agreed that it was sensible to adopt the proposals put together by NFDC.

The adopted NFDC new Standards Regime will be brought to the next Finance & Policy meeting to be considered for adoption.

10. To discuss the Lengthsmans Scheme

Members were advised by the Town Clerk that they had received a good response for tenders. It was agreed that Cllrs Adams, Connolly & (G) Wilson would meet on Thursday 31st May to open tenders to award the contract.

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

No public present.

12. To note any items of Correspondence

CCTV Recreation Ground – Following the vandalism to the Whippet track the Whippet Club have enquired about having CCTV fitted to the Sports Club to film any further problems. Sgt. Freeman had sent information regarding a company who provided such technology as a comparator. The Town Clerk will enquire about systems and prices and report back to the next Amenities meeting.

Business Rate Charges on the Sports Club – Cllr Adams agreed to review the advice from NFDC regarding business rates charges on the Sports Club and make a decision as to what rate relief is best for the Club to claim.

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

Nothing to report.

Standing Orders were suspended.

14. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 27th June 2012

The meeting then went into closed session to discuss the future of the Visitor Information Centre.

The meeting closed at 9.45 pm.