

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 26th June 2013 at 7.30 pm in the Town Hall, Fordingbridge

Present:

Cllr Connolly – Chairman

Cllrs Adams, Anstey, Lewendon, Hale, Paton, Perkins, Price, Robbins, (A) Wilson & (G) Wilson

In attendance:

Ms K Mason, Town Clerk

Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer.

Mr M Calver & Mr T Halsky, Fordingbridge Rotary

1. To accept apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Fulford.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

Cllr Adams declared an interest in agenda item 5

Cllr Hale & Cllr Robbins declared an interest in agenda item 7

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2013 and report any matters arising.

It was proposed by Cllr Anstey, seconded by Cllr Price and Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2013 be signed as a true record.

Matters arising

Laptop for Planning Presentations – Cllr Anstey advised that Power Point software was needed to be loaded as currently they could not be shown. The Clerk to arrange.

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

Cllr Adams declared an interest but remained in the room.

It was AGREED that the monies collected and payment of accounts be approved and paid.

Cllr Perkins entered the meeting.

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

No matters were raised.

6. To receive any recommendations from other Committees

No recommendations from Committees.

7. To consider the following grant applications:

Cllrs Hale & Robbins left the room before any discussion or debate.

Victoria Rooms – it was proposed by Cllr Adams, seconded by Cllr (G) Wilson and Resolved: to give a grant of £597.00 10 members for, 1 against.

Turn Up For Fun – it was proposed by Cllr (G) Wilson, seconded by Cllr Anstey and Resolved: to give a grant of £300 10 members for, 1 against.

Cllrs Hale & Robbins returned to the meeting.

8. To discuss the Town Council provision of hanging baskets throughout the town.

This item was deferred until the next General Council meeting on Wednesday 3rd July.

9. To discuss a proposal for funding a Skate Festival at the Recreation Ground.

The previous Skate Festival held in 2011 was an enormous success with the youngsters who use the Skate Park. Mr P Arms who organised it would like to repeat the occasion in September 2013 but requested help with funding the event.

Members agreed to support the event in principal but requested further information of the potential costs involved.

The Clerk to investigate whether the event could be covered by the Town Council's Insurance policy.

This item will be an agenda item at the next General Council meeting on Wednesday 3rd July.

10. To review the 106 agreement provision for Fordingbridge

The Clerk advised that the Mayor and herself had met with Chris Elliott, Director of Planning, NFDC and 3 of his colleagues to discuss the provision of 106 agreement monies which are held by NFDC following various developments which have taken place in Fordingbridge and been the subject of such an agreement. There is currently money in the region of £250k being held on behalf of Fordingbridge Parish.

Bids to spend the money are placed District Councillors on behalf of their parish(s) to a Committee at NFDC, which meets twice a year. The Committee determines whether the request meets the criteria set down by the 106 agreement and can release the money if the project fits the conditions.

The list of projects that Town Council members drew up previously was discussed and it was agreed that these projects would be costed by the Town Council prior to the request being sent for NFDC Committee consideration.

It was AGREED that the list of bids and costings would be an agenda item at the meeting of Finance & Policy on August 28th for agreement prior it being sent to NFDC for consideration by Committee.

11. To discuss the provision of payment of allowances for Town Councillors

Under the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 there is provision for basic, travelling and subsistence allowances to parish councillors.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr Paton, seconded by Cllr Lewendon and Resolved: that Fordingbridge Town Council do not provide basic allowances to members of Fordingbridge Town Council.

12. To discuss the 2012/13 internal audit report and annual return.

The Finance Officer discussed the report by IAC Ltd, the new internal Auditor, and the recommendations made. Necessary changes to the Financial regulations will be brought to the next meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Finance Officer for her hard work on the 2012/13 audit and annual return.

13. To discuss unspent provision from the 2012/13 financial year.

There is no unspent provision.

14. To receive a proposal regarding the Christmas lights provision from Mr I Newman

Although Mr Newman was absent he had provided the Clerk with a copy of a report on the proposal to contract the Christmas Lights provision and contractors contract which were circulated to members. The proposed cost of the lights for the next 5 years would be an annual sum of £7850.

The Town Council have budgeted £5k towards Christmas lights in 2013. Fordingbridge Rotary Club would be willing to cover the shortfall but cannot enter into a contract.

The contract proposes that catenary wires are stretched across the streets, to remain throughout the year and the Christmas lights would be hung off the wires at the appropriate time. The electricity supply for the lights would be centralised.

Mr M Calver from Rotary, who has co-ordinated the erecting of the Christmas Lights during previous years, explained that providing the lights in 2012 was the most expensive year to date and costs would only get higher. Fixed costs such as stress testing and electrical testing were rising annually. It was also becoming increasingly dangerous for volunteers to fix the lights. Currently, the lights run off electricity supplies from shop/building premises with only one set run off a street lamp. The cost of electricity for lights is very low for the 5 weeks they are up but he considered it was now time to move the operation from a volunteer base to a commercial base making the whole operation more safe.

Members requested that clarification for the following questions:

Is the replacement of lights included?

How many supporting wires will need poles

Is the cost of maintenance of the lights and wires included within the contract?

Are the Christmas trees and their lights included?

It was AGREED that following a meeting with Mr Newman and the contractor to gain clarification on the contract, members would discuss the issue at the next Finance & Policy meeting.

15. To note any items of Correspondence

Letters of thanks for grants were received from Rae Straton Luncheon Club and Victim Support.

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

Nothing to report.

17. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 31st July 2013.

The meeting finished at 9.00 pm.