

**Minutes of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday, 20th November 2013
at 8.00 pm in the Town Hall**

PRESENT:

Cllr. G. Wilson (Chairman)
Cllrs Adams, Buchanan, Hale, Price & (A) Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE:

Cllr Anstey & Ms R Croker, Footpath Officer.
Ms K Mason, Town Clerk

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Cllrs Connolly.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

None received

3. To confirm the Minutes of the meeting held on the 18th September 2013 and report on any matters arising

It was proposed by Cllr (A) Wilson and seconded by Cllr Price and **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 18th September 2013 be signed as a true record.

Matters arising.

Cleaning - Cllr (G) Wilson advised that the standard of cleanliness of the Town Hall had improved.

Replacement white goods for the kitchen and water boiler - The Fordingbridge Entertainment's Committee had paid 50% towards the cost of a dishwasher and the item was being purchased.

New Speakers - Peter Elbro from Moving Images will be invited to speak about the proposed new speakers in the Main Hall at the January meeting.

4. To receive any matters raised by members of the public

No matters raised.

5. To report on Matters concerning St Mary's Closed Churchyard and Stuckton Road Cemetery

Trees – The Clerk advised that a meeting had taken place between 3 members of the PCC and the Mayor and herself to discuss matters affecting the churchyard. The PCC had asked if trees were part of the remit of NFDC to maintain as they are responsible for the maintenance of the closed churchyard. The Clerk was enquiring on behalf of NFDC but indications were that they were responsible for tree works as part of the overall maintenance.

St Mary's Church Footpath – the Diocese has indicated that permission will be granted for the new footpath providing they have all the details as to materials, depth etc. Following a meeting with NFDC, the Mayor and Clerk were told that Developers Contribution money will be released to pay for the footpath which will provide safe access for residents between Bowerwood Rd and Church Square.

The PCC requested that the entrance from the lych gate to the Main doors also be included in the upgrade. There is no Developers Contribution money for this part of the footpath but the Clerk is researching any grants that might be available.

6. To report on any matters relating to the Town Hall

Disabled Toilet - members looked at the problem of the disabled toilet being too small for wheelchair users. The solution is not straightforward as it will involve major work to all the Town Hall toilets in order to provide the space needed for the disabled toilet. Members accepted that the Town Hall is a public building and that alterations needed to be made to accommodate the needs of disabled users.

In light of the probable major work that will be needed and that no budget has yet been allocated it was AGREED that this should be discussed by the Finance & Policy Committee so that a provisional budget can be set for the forthcoming financial year.

7. To report on any matters concerning footpaths

Parish Footpaths – The Footpath Officer Ruth Croker reported that a resident has complained that Footpath No 4 from the back of the St Mary's Church Hall to Ashford Road and then into Dorset has stiles that are too high. The stiles have been put in by the landowner so are unlikely to be changed. The problems reported seem to exist on the Dorset (Alderholt parish) side of the path. The Clerk to advised Alderholt PC.

Avon Valley Path – still closed close to St Mary's Church because of badger activity. A diversion is in place.

Footpath 38 & 39 – the stiles are being blocked and kissing gates locked by the land owner. HCC are aware and are trying to sort out.

Footpath 76 – From Tinkers Cross to Sagles Spring is very boggy. HCC are looking at ways of repairing but will be major work.

Footpath volunteers to help clear and mend footpaths are a way of ensuring oaths stay open as there is very little budget for repairs by HCC. The RFO to look at insurance cover on the Town Council policy for volunteers.

Riverside Development, Salisbury St – the Clerk reported that two illegal signs had appeared advising the public that there was no pedestrian walk-way through the development. When the Groundsman tried to remove them he was remonstrated with by a resident. The Mayor visited the resident who was insistent that the development is private.

The matter has been passed to Cllr Sevier and Neil Williamson of NFDC Development Control as access is granted as part of a 106 agmt attached to the original permission for the development.

8. To report on any matters concerning Highways

Nothing to report.

9. To report on any matters concerning Allotments

Nothing to report

10. To discuss the report on the Information Office.

Members agreed this was an excellent report. The Clerk advised that she and the staff were discussing how to develop their role in the Council and that they could take over additional administration tasks.

Cllr Adams suggested that the staff might like to get involved with developing a new Fordingbridge Tourism leaflet. The Clerk to liaise with the staff and Cllr Adams.

Ruth Croker, Footpath Officer left the meeting.

11. To discuss budget proposals for the 2014/15 financial year and to make a recommendation for the Finance & Policy Committee on 27th November 2014.

Members discussed the 2014/15 budget proposals put forward by the Chairman and RFO.

It was AGREED to keep that Town Hall hire costs at the same rate as this financial year.

Allotment rents to increase from £10 to £12.50 and £20 to £25, depending on the size of plot.

Members AGREED that burial rates should increase but wanted information from other local burial authorities before they made a decision. It was AGREED to recommend an increase and discuss with further information at the Finance & Policy Committee on 27th November.

Finger post replacement - Members AGREED that the replacement fingerpost sign 'Avonway Community Centre' should be funded by Avonway. The Clerk to advise.

The other budget proposals were AGREED to be put forward to the Finance & Policy Committee.

12. To note any items of correspondence

Nothing to report.

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

Nothing to report

14. To note the date of the next meeting as 15th January 2014

The meeting ended at 9.00pm.