

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes Committee held on Wednesday 18th March 2015 at 7.30pm at the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

Present:

Cllr (G) Wilson – Chairman
Cllrs Price, Adams, (A) Wilson, Hale, Earth & Connolly

In Attendance:

Helen Richards – Town Clerk
Ruth Croker – Footpath Officer
Peter Taylor – Allotment Officer
One other member of the Public

1. To receive any apologies for absence

No apologies received.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

No declarations received

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2015 and report on any matters arising

Cllr (A) Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: the Minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 2015 be signed as a true record.

Cllr Anstey joined the meeting and sat in the public gallery.

Matters Arising

Minute No. 8 – Following the replacement of the beacon lights on the pedestrian crossing in the High Street it was reported that this provided poorer quality light (dimmer) than the previous lights.

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

No matters received.

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

The Chairman advised the meeting that an invoice had been received from a local funeral director regarding cleaning works required to a memorial stone in St Mary's Churchyard – this was being investigated by the Clerk as it is unclear who caused the damage.

The Groundsman will shortly commence the levelling of graves at Stuckton Road Cemetery and the skip at the Cemetery has recently been emptied.

The Chairman then asked the Clerk to report on the following items:

- Review of Burial Regulations and Charging Structure
- Exclusive Rights of Burial

The Clerk advised the meeting that a full written report had been distributed to Members of the Committee and summarised the report as follows:

Following a recently attended course run by the Institute of Cemetery & Crematorium Management (ICCM) it became clear that correct procedures had not been followed with respect to the purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial. Since mid-2009 the rights of burial for graves which had been allocated for immediate use had not been purchased nor had an deed of Exclusive Right of Burial been provided. While this is not unlawful, it does mean that the families of the deceased have no right to either erect a memorial or carry out further burials into the grave. Before any burial can take place in an existing grave or a memorial erected, the correct ownership MUST be established. If an original purchaser is deceased the Rights must be formally transferred before any opening of the grave or memorial is erected.

Following investigation, there are 66 graves which are affected, most of which have had memorials erected on them and several that have received second interments. After seeking advice from the ICCM the following remedial action is proposed:

- Prepare Electronic Register of all Exclusive Rights of Burial Issued (Completed)
- Prepare Electronic Register of Burials (currently held in hardcopy but with no index) (ongoing)
- Update the Registers with details of Interments from Interment Forms – this will identify the “Purchaser” of the Exclusive Rights of Burial for each Grave (work to be done) Firstly for those graves which have not had rights purchased and secondly for all graves – this will attempt to establish the current owner of all Exclusive Rights of Burial.
- Prepare duplicate Exclusive Rights of Burial deeds for graves which do not currently have them (Work to be done) No charge to be made for these.

As time has elapsed it may be difficult to locate the current owner and due to the sensitive nature of this matter, both copies of the deed will be held by the Council. These can then be referred to if further requests are received relating to these graves.

The other issue for the Committee to consider is the proposal for future procedures and charging structure. As part of this investigation, a cost comparison has been carried out across other neighbouring Burial Authorities; Salisbury City Council, New Forest District Council, Ringwood Town Council and Woodgreen Parish Council. Discussion took place regarding revised charges, the criteria for Residency and the inclusion of Godshill and Sandleheath Parishes within the charging structure. The following 3 proposals and resolutions were made.

Cllr (A) Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED**: to recommend to the Finance & Policy Committee on 25th March 2015 that a charge be re-introduced for the Purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial of £300 for Residents and £600 for non-residents

Cllr Adams proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Price and therefore **RESOLVED**: to recommend to the Finance & Policy Committee on 25th March 2015 that the criteria for Resident to include the following wording “*At the discretion of the Town Clerk, to include former residents who have moved out of the Parish for medical or other residential care*”. It is also recommended that residents of Godshill and Sandleheath Parishes are charged at the Residents rates.

Cllr Adams proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED**: to recommend to the Finance & Policy Committee on 25th March 2015 that the charges relating Cremation Plots and the Burial of Ashes be half those of Graves and Burial of Body.

The report concluded that a full review of Burial Regulations is also required and the Clerk advised that this will be reported to the May meeting of the Committee.

Cllr Connolly then gave thanks to the Clerk for her additional work and commitment to ensuring that a complete and up to date record of all graves within the cemetery is achieved.

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

- Redecoration - The Chairman reported that the Redecoration works to the Entrance Hall, Toilets and Main Hall had recently been completed.

A further cleaning of the drains in the pavement which serve the gutters at the front would be undertaken shortly as they are once again blocked.

- Town Hall Hire Agreement – Following further recent amendment, Members AGREED the draft document with the following further amendment:

Second paragraph to read: *The Town Hall shall be open to all members of the Community.*

7. To report on any matters concerning the Memorial Bungalow

The Clerk advised that fencing materials have been purchased in the sum of £240.00 and work to replace the front fence would commence shortly.

The clerk advised that an inspection of the Memorial Bungalow would be carried out shortly by a surveyor. Members raised concern over the necessity for this, no legal requirement to have structural survey. It was agreed that the property should be inspected annually, but not necessarily by a qualified surveyor; however a full structural inspection should be carried out on a less frequent basis (5 years). Clerk to discuss with the Finance Officer.

8. To report on any matters concerning footpaths

- Countryside Access Plan – this had been distributed to Members. The Footpath Officer reported that she had been working with HCC on the developing plan. Members had no comments to make on the plan.

The Footpath officer reported that Natural England was due to visit the Badger Sett on the closed Avon Valley path today and the results of that visit were awaited. Natural England and Countryside Access Team are keen to re-open this path.

Cllr Fulford entered the meeting and sat in the public gallery

Marl Lane/Puddleslosh Lane – Footpath 78b – Visited on 17th March 2015 and spoke to both landowners who are keen to co operate and move the fence. Hampshire CC is hopeful that the Article 4 Directive placed on the land will be removed in order that the fence can be moved. Lots of animals on site at present, recent incident involving local children gaining access to land containing animals.

Travellers returned to site on Marl Lane on Tuesday, boundary hedge planted and caravan on site.

Falconwood Close Footpath – No further action yet undertaken – Clerk to contact NFDC.

Church Path at Stuckton (Hyde Parish) - Hyde PC had been successful in obtaining funding from the National Park Authority, Hampshire County Council and Stuckton Church towards the cost of repairs to the Footpath near Stuckton Church cemetery – works have commenced.

9. To report on any matters concerning Highways

Burgate Parking – Ruth Croker reporting as resident – Lots of cars parking, no yellow lines within the turning circle results in buses not being able to turn in cars parked. No notices of times of restriction, scheme unfinished? Cllr Heron has taken responsibility for this scheme. Possible that additional parking spaces will be available within school car park but objections from local residents.

Block Paving replacement – Clerk advised that SSE contractor obtaining replacement blocks for repairs outside of Town Hall. Blocks also to be replaced at Riverside Place (with blocks not tarmac) Hampshire Highways awaiting new budgets.

10. To report any matters concerning Allotments

The chairman reported that part of the bank at the Allotment field needs to be built up. An inspection was carried out on 2nd March and Assistant Clerk to write to tenants of plots not being worked.

Presentation by Peter Taylor, Allotments Officer – Provision of Toilet at Allotments

Currently a portable toilet is provided by the Council during the months from May to October. However as the allotments are worked all year round and there has been an increase in female tenants, there is a requirement for a toilet to be provided throughout the year. Rather than providing a portable toilet such as the one currently used, other options have been considered. Provision of a permanent toilet and building has been investigated in the past, however the cost was prohibitive – there is currently no water or sewerage system to the site and provision of these would be costly. No recent quote has been obtained for the provision of a permanent structure.

The provision of a compost toilet has therefore been investigated and details distributed to Members. The Allotment Officer gave details of how the toilet would function together with several cost options:

- Toilet with provision of building £6250 - £6600
- Toilet fitted into building constructed separately by the Council £3850

With the expected usage at the allotments, the toilet would require emptying once every year or possibly every 2 years and a volunteer has already come forward to perform this task. The Compost Toilet would require no running water. Members raised concern over the effect on the ground conditions with the use of a soak away as in close proximity to the river. Permission and advice would need to be sought from the Environment Agency.

The Allotment Committee may form an Association which will be discussed at the AGM in the Autumn. An Association could seek funding for projects such as this.

Members **AGREED** to discuss further following the AGM of the Allotment Committee.

Cllr Perkins entered the meeting and sat in the public gallery.

11. To report on Matters concerning the Information Office

The chairman reported that the Lease for the Information Office was due for renewal in May.

12. To note any items of correspondence

No items of correspondence.

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

Clerk nothing to report.

Cllr Connolly requested that any Highway issues be reported to the Clerk as an inspection is to be carried out by Hampshire Highways, The Mayor and Town Clerk at which time problems can be identified and prioritised.

14. To note the date of the next meeting as Wednesday 20th May 2015

The meeting closed at 8.25pm