

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on Wednesday, 17th April 2019 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall, Fordingbridge

Present:

Cllr. Hale (Deputy Mayor)

Councillors Adams, Earth, Lewendon, Mouland, Paton, White, Wilson

In attendance:

Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk

Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk

Cllr. E Heron, HCC

Revd Nicky Davies (Guest Speaker)

Beverly Judd (Assistant Guest Speaker)

PCSO Stephen May

PC Neale

A representative of Salisbury Journal

8 members of the public

1. To receive apologies for absence

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Anstey, Cllr Sevier (NFDC), Rev Gary Philbrick (Vicar) and Malcolm Connolly (former Mayor).

2. To confirm the minutes of the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly on Wednesday 18th April 2018

It was proposed by Cllr Earth and seconded by Cllr Lewendon that the minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 18th April 2018 be signed as a true record.

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

PC Neale and PCSO May presented the attached report (see appendix). They reported that they are tackling the issues that people are telling them about and asked that the public call them to report problems. There will be an additional officer within the next six months.

Questions from the floor followed.

Q1. There are people drinking on the street in Fordingbridge and this is threatening. What is the police position on this?

A1. Drinking on the street is not a crime in itself and is largely not causing harm. If behaviour is threatening then report it and the police can deal with it.

Q2. Cars are driving out of the Roundhill entrance to the car park, past a no exit sign. What are the police doing about this?

A2. Police are keeping an eye on this.

Q3. Is parking a police matter? For example on the road outside Avonway.

A3. Not specifically, however if a car is parked in a dangerous place then report it and if someone is available they will come and take a look. Cllr Lewendon reported that there was an accident there years ago and thought that people's attitude to walking a short distance from the nearby car park was poor.

4. To welcome the guest speaker, Revd Nicky Davies, Associate Priest of Avon Valley Partnership of Churches

Revd Nicky Davies gave the following speech on Fairtrade in Fordingbridge.

Many thanks for inviting me to talk to you tonight about Fairtrade in Fordingbridge.

I am Rev Nicky Davies. I work across the seven churches of the Avon Valley Partnership. St Mary's Fordingbridge is the mother church of the team. As Associate Priest I take particular responsibility for the churches in Hale, Woodgreen and Breamore. I also take responsibility for many other things including how we promote Fairtrade in all our churches. As well as preaching about it and holding special services, such as during Fairtrade Fortnight which takes place annually usually in February, we have gathered a team together from all of our churches. These people are keen advocates of Fairtrade and some of them have been involved with it for many years. They all are all Traidcraft sellers. This means they buy and sell Traidcraft goods at events and after services.

Some of them are here with me tonight and I'd like to conclude this talk by hearing them say a little bit each about what they do, why they are involved in promoting Fairtrade and what it means to them.

Traidcraft is based in Gateshead and is celebrating it's 40th birthday this year. You may or may not have heard that Traidcraft have been going through some real difficulties recently but, following a drastic restructure, they have managed to survive and many dedicated supporters like us are continuing to support them as they go forward.

Traidcraft plc, their trading company, is one of the leading dedicated fair trade companies in the UK and globally. They source the UK's widest range of fair trade foods, beverages, household cleaning, charcoal and rubber products, as well as fair trade crafts and clothing, from fair trade suppliers in more than 30 developing countries. The charity part of their business, Traidcraft Exchange, directly works to support the producers, to ensure that they get paid fairly for what they make and grow. Traidcraft also pay a premium to their communities, so that they benefit too.

The Fairtrade Foundation licenses the FAIRTRADE Mark to thousands of products in the UK. The supply chain of each of these products must comply with the Fairtrade Standards. The Mark is now, I think you'll agree, widely recognised. Traidcraft is proud of the fact that they were one of the founders of the Fairtrade Foundation back in the 1990's.

However, Traidcraft say that although the Fairtrade certification and the development of the FAIRTRADE Mark are great they go far beyond mere compliance with a set of standards.

Their approach is different:

- They focus on the most marginalised groups in developing countries, often working with suppliers that mainstream businesses would choose not to work with.
- They try to understand suppliers' problems and assist in finding solutions. They seek funding to implement short or long-term projects to help suppliers grow and develop sustainable businesses. Read more about these projects on their website.
- They try to ensure that the people who make or grow our products are connected to the people who buy them by telling their stories and showing their pictures.
- There are many types of products that are not covered by the standards that allow a Fairtrade Mark to be applied. Traidcraft invest their time to ensure the key principles of Fair Trade are followed so that a product can be sold as 'fair trade' even when that product does not carry a Fairtrade Mark.
- For their entire history Traidcraft have been pioneering and innovating in new Fair Trade products and sectors, very often as a catalyst for the development of standards which may then be made available to all through the Fairtrade Mark.
- They have a strong sense of partnership with many of their suppliers. Relationships are important and, to bring our range of products to the UK, we work directly with our suppliers or through like-minded organisations who themselves work directly with their suppliers.

So, I hope you are getting a sense of how important Fairtrade is to the lives of the suppliers? Buying Fairtrade as often as we can is an easy way we can help to lift others out of poverty. In effect we are giving to charity as we buy the things we want! It may mean paying a bit more but please let's be real here – we really can all afford to pay a little more... and I'd like to think that if, God forbid, the tables were turned and we needed the help, others would commit to do this to support us!

Traidcraft is a wonderful organization that began with church roots and as well as buying directly from them they do supply many Christian book shops and other shops. However, as you will know in Fordingbridge we have the wonderful Co-op, and other places, who also do a great job of promoting Fairtrade. For many years Fairtrade bananas, tea and coffee were the most available things but now there is a wider range of things, if the shops can sell them?

Breamore Church of England Primary School has recently been classed (forgive the pun) as Fair Aware and with a little more effort they will become a Fairtrade School. I think the first in this area. I and others have been leading assemblies about Fairtrade in that school for many years and more recently I have been running an after-school Fairtrade Tuck Shop. Paul, the Mayor and I, were privileged to be invited to their recent Fairtrade Brekkie where the children ran all the stands, they also led an assembly about Fairtrade.

Many of our churches are already registered as Fairtrade, the URC, Methodist and we already are, the Salvation Army and New Life church are on the way.

So this is the nub of it – it wouldn't take much for Fordingbridge to become a Fairtrade Town and that is my ambition, with your support.

My determination to do this has been spurred on by a visit last year to Wimborne which has been a Fairtrade Town since 2006.

What is a Fairtrade Town and why work towards it?

Fairtrade is about bringing the farmer and the shopper closer together. It's about putting people at the heart of trade. Becoming a Fairtrade Town sends a powerful message about how our community wants trade to work and will directly benefit some of the world's poorest farmers and workers through increasing awareness and sales of Fairtrade in our area.

People power works and Fairtrade Towns have been essential in building support for Fairtrade across the UK. A study funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)¹ found that the most effective campaigns to encourage ethical shopping are those that take place at a collective level, such as the creation of Fairtrade Cities, rather than those that only target individual behaviour.

A Fairtrade Town is any community that:

- supports Fairtrade and deepens understanding of the benefits Fairtrade brings
- takes action by choosing Fairtrade products whenever possible and encourages others to do likewise
- achieves and continues to take action on the five Fairtrade Town goals set by the Fairtrade Foundation.

Footnote 1. Governing the subjects and spaces of ethical consumption (2006). www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre

The Five Goals

1. Local council passes a resolution supporting Fairtrade, and agrees to serve Fairtrade products (for example, in meetings, offices and canteens).
2. A range of (at least four) Fairtrade products are readily available in the area's retail outlets (shops, supermarkets, newsagents, petrol stations) and served in local catering outlets (cafes, restaurants, pubs).
3. Local workplaces and community organisations (places of worship, schools, universities, colleges etc.) support Fairtrade and use Fairtrade products wherever possible.
4. Media coverage and events raise awareness and understanding of Fairtrade across the community.
5. A local Fairtrade steering group is convened to ensure the Fairtrade Town campaign continues to develop and gain new support.

I am sure, with the council's support, that we can achieve this status, adding to the town's Toilet Twinning success, and it would be a wonderful example and say so much about our values.

Cllr Moulard asked Revd Davies how she became involved with Fairtrade. She replied that she'd been introduced at a coffee morning.

The Deputy Mayor thanked Revd Nicky Davies for her presentation.

5. To receive the Annual Report from the Town Mayor

The Deputy Mayor Edward Hale gave the following report.

For Successes I have four sections:

1. Ongoing facilities. The Town Council continues to manage many facilities in the town to a very high standard. These include the Recreation Ground, the Information Centre, the Cemetery, the allotments, and the play areas. The Recreation Ground is enjoyed by many sports groups, and by many residents and visitors who use the main play area and other facilities. The information centre provides services on behalf of other councils and groups to help our residents and visitors. The cemetery is praised for its high standard of upkeep. Many residents maintain allotments. All of these involve large amounts of work by Councillors and staff to operate as well as they do.
2. Short-term events. These include the Christmas lights and the playscheme. Although Christmas in Fordingbridge is now managed very successfully by the Events Committee, the lights are still provided by the Town Council and this involves our staff in a large amount of preparation to ensure the contractor has carried out all the required checks and obtained all the permissions. Our lights are always some of the best in this area and there was a real possibility last year that we could not provide any lights. Our staff had some crisis meetings to resolve this and I was hugely relieved when a solution was found. The playscheme is also very popular and was successful last year but our staff have to review the funding every year as grants from other organisations are reduced.
3. One-off events. Our town arranges many excellent individual events which the Town Council is involved with. During the last year particular successes have been the World War 1 commemoration events (the parade and service on the Recreation Ground, the WW1 exhibition in the Town Hall organised by Ann Sevier, and the crochet poppies), the summer show and Christmas in Fordingbridge organised by the Events Committee, the Turks 150 year celebrations, and events at St Marys including the latest Fordwick. All the Cool Stuff continues to arrange very successful specialist events.
4. The new skate park. Following many discussions, consultations, and considering different proposals and contractors, the skate park has been completed. This will be a huge asset to the town and is a chance to improve facilities for younger residents and visitors.

For Challenges I have two main items:

1. Development around the town. Councillors and staff have spent a lot of time trying to understand and respond to various consultations from the District Council. We all know there is a shortage of housing in this country, but we want to ensure what is built is the right type in the right location. The Town Council were consulted on the latest Local Development Plan and we had some long meetings discussing our response. We agreed that, if development is required it should be to the north of the town with a direct link to the A338, and we opposed any development to the west of the town due to the poor access roads. It is frustrating that the Development Plan under review by the Government inspector does not appear to guarantee a link to the A338, and there is a proposal for an even larger development to the west of the town. I think we are going to be working on this one much more in the future.

2. The Town Hall building. This time last year we knew we had water leaking through the roof around the clock tower, but we didn't know the extent of the damage. During the year a temporary support has been installed to support the clock tower, and experts have designed and specified a way to resolve the problems. There have been some difficult decisions as the Town Council has a legal responsibility for this Listed building, but must spend our funds in the best possible way.

Looking to the Future, there are four main areas to look forward to:

1. Elections. For the first time in 24 years, Fordingbridge has a contested election this year with 13 candidates for 12 seats. This is a contrast to some areas where there are not enough candidates.
2. Town Hall Repairs. We have now awarded the contract to repair this building so everyone will be moving out for at least three months. The staff will move to the Information Centre and the Council will hold meetings at Victoria Rooms. The Council has previously agreed to make more use of the Town Hall and hope to find a way to base all council services in one location in the future. I am looking forward to getting on with the building work at last, and also to new opportunities for using the restored building in the future. We are one of only a few Town Councils to have an historic building like this as our base.
3. WW1 Memorial. The Councillors are keen to arrange a memorial in the gardens to mark 100 years since the end of the first war. A stone will be unveiled in the next few months.
4. Developers funding. A side effect of new development around the town is the opportunity to use funding from the developers to improve the town. We have already used some of these funds for the new skate park and are considering other work in the future. The new council will be able to decide on priorities but it is important that we make the most of these funds to offer better facilities to residents and visitors. The Town Council intends to consult residents on the options in the future.

Thank Yous

1. Firstly I want to thank all Councillors for their hard work during the last year. It is not just attending the meetings, it is reading all the emails and documents which we receive. Most of us have areas which we get more involved in and I think we bring together a good range of skills and knowledge. We have already said farewell to two long serving Councillors, David Price and Malcolm Connolly, and Rosemary Fulford will leave us at the end of this month. It would be shocking to calculate the amount of time that each of these three have given over to working on Town Council business, and the knowledge that they have shared. I want to say a particular thank you to these three, and also to all the Town Councillors.
2. Secondly to thank the Town Council staff. Martine and Rachel, our Finance Officer and Deputy Clerk, for managing our finances and administration so well, and our Information centre staff and grounds staff for their important work to keep our services operating throughout the year. Helen our Town Clerk left us at Christmas and we have had a smooth transfer with Paul settling in well to the Town Clerk role for the last four months. Thank you to all of our staff team for your excellent work.

6. To report on finances for 2018/19 (un-audited accounts) and the budget for 19/20.

The Town Clerk gave the following report. Please see the appendix for the finance report.

Unfortunately our finance officer is unable to be here today but you should have a copy of her report. In terms of income, in 2018/19 in addition to the precept of circa £200,000, the council received additional income of approximately £150,000. A break down is provided in the finance report. In terms of notable expenditure, during the year the council have paid £16,000 in relation to repairs to the Town Hall roof. The council has also incurred costs of £90,000 for the skate park, which is now completed, and was funded from section 106 funds, an NFDC grant and reserves.

The CIL funds received are ringfenced and will be partly utilised to fund work on the Town Hall roof. Any additional suggestions for use of CIL funds should be sent to the Town Hall office. £3,000 was allocated for section 137 grants and these funds were fully utilised. A break down is provided in the finance report. For 2019/20 the Council increased the precept by 16% primarily to meet election costs, to pay for a buildings' manager, meet additional staff costs and provide funds for maintenance. In 2019/20 the Council is looking at undertaking work to improve the pavilion at Recreation Ground. The Council is also working with NFDC to look at improving the open spaces and play areas. The Town Hall roof repairs are a priority and it is hoped that work will commence shortly. The work will be funded by way of CIL funds, a public works loan and reserves. Full accounts will be available for inspection once the internal audit has been completed.

There were no questions.

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

Q1. What is the Council's response to development in Fordingbridge?

A1. The Council have given a robust written response which can be viewed online.

Q2. Should the Town Councillors not also verbally represent and summarise this report at the Local Plan Review hearings?

A1. Cllr Wilson reported that if an individual speaks, they are only allocated a maximum of three minutes and therefore a written report is better. Cllr Heron (HCC) concurred that inspectors read all reports and that by not making additional verbal representation, it avoids being drawn into debate with barristers and professional experts.

8. To receive any other relevant parish business

The candidates standing for election to Fordingbridge Town Council on 2nd May were introduced to the meeting.

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Hale, thanked everyone for attending and thanked Revd Nicky Davies for her talk. The meeting closed at 8.29pm.

APPENDIX

Report on finances for 2018/19 (un-audited accounts)

Income

For 2018/19 the Town Council received a precept of £198550, as noted last year this represented a 2% increase to meet the increasing costs of wages and utilities.

In 2018/19 the Council received additional income of approximately £150k. This includes lengthsman income (£13200), burial fees (£10000), allotments (£1400), CIL funding (£59k), hall lettings (£1300), recreation ground fees (£9600), hanging basket fees (£3275), Playscheme grants/fees (£14000), fishing fees (£500), lease income (£7500), information office income/map/leaflet sales (£21000) and sundry income/donations (£6700).

Income from the sports clubs has reduced due to decreased use of the pitches (transfer to Burgate School during the winter months).

Expenditure

During the year the on-going repairs to the town hall roof have cost an additional £16000, staff costs have cost an additional £10000 due to mid-year recruitment and overtime to support the increasing workload, and the skate park replacement has cost £90000 (which will be funded through S106 funds and a grant held by New Forest District Council and reserves – the park will be completed in April 2019 and the balance (£40000) will become payable at that time and will be funded from reserves).

The Council continued to support the Christmas Lights and the Hanging Baskets/Floral Displays, in association with the Business Forum and Rotary Club. 2019/20 is the final year of the contract to provide the Christmas Lights and, due to changing legislation, the Council is currently reviewing the feasibility of the current lights in the longer term.

The CIL funds will be transferred to reserves where it is ring-fenced until agreement has been reached for their use. It is proposed that some of the funds will go towards Town Hall repairs. If anyone has further suggestions, please let the office know. The forecast year end position (taking into account the use of reserves and S106 funds noted above) will be an overspend of £18000, to be met from the general reserves held by the Council.

S137 Grants

The Council have a budget of £3000 for S137 grants, during 2018/19 £3000 was allocated (compared with £2550 in 2017/18) – this is primarily due to a low level of applications from local groups.

SW Ambulance Trust/Defibrillator	£500.00
Hope for Tomorrow	£600.00
Sandleheath Sea Scouts	£100.00
Turn Up For Fun (TUFF)	£500.00
New Forest Disability	£200.00
Fordingbridge Day Centre	£300.00
Avon Valley Dementia	£300.00
Avon Valley Concerts	£250.00
Westacres Residents	£200.00
Burgate School Awards	£50.00
Total	£3000.00

Budget for 2019/20

Following a review of property and services, the Council took the difficult decision to increase the precept by 16.3%. For 2019/20 the Town Council requested a precept of £230922.

	Council Tax Requirement	Tax Base	Council Tax per Band D
2018/19	£198550	2279	£87.12
2019/20	£230922	2281.60	£101.21
Increase	£32372	2.6	£14.09

The increase will cover election fees (£5000), a buildings manager (£7500), additional staff costs to cover the additional workload (£7500), changes to software licences (£2400), increased buildings maintenance and repair costs £6000, increased provision for S137 grants (£2000) and inflation rises for other services and utilities

In 2019/20 the Council will continue to improve the facilities at the recreation ground, concentrating on refurbishing the changing rooms and completing the skate park during the current financial year. The Council will review the open spaces throughout the town in conjunction with New Forest District Council and improve the play areas following consultation.

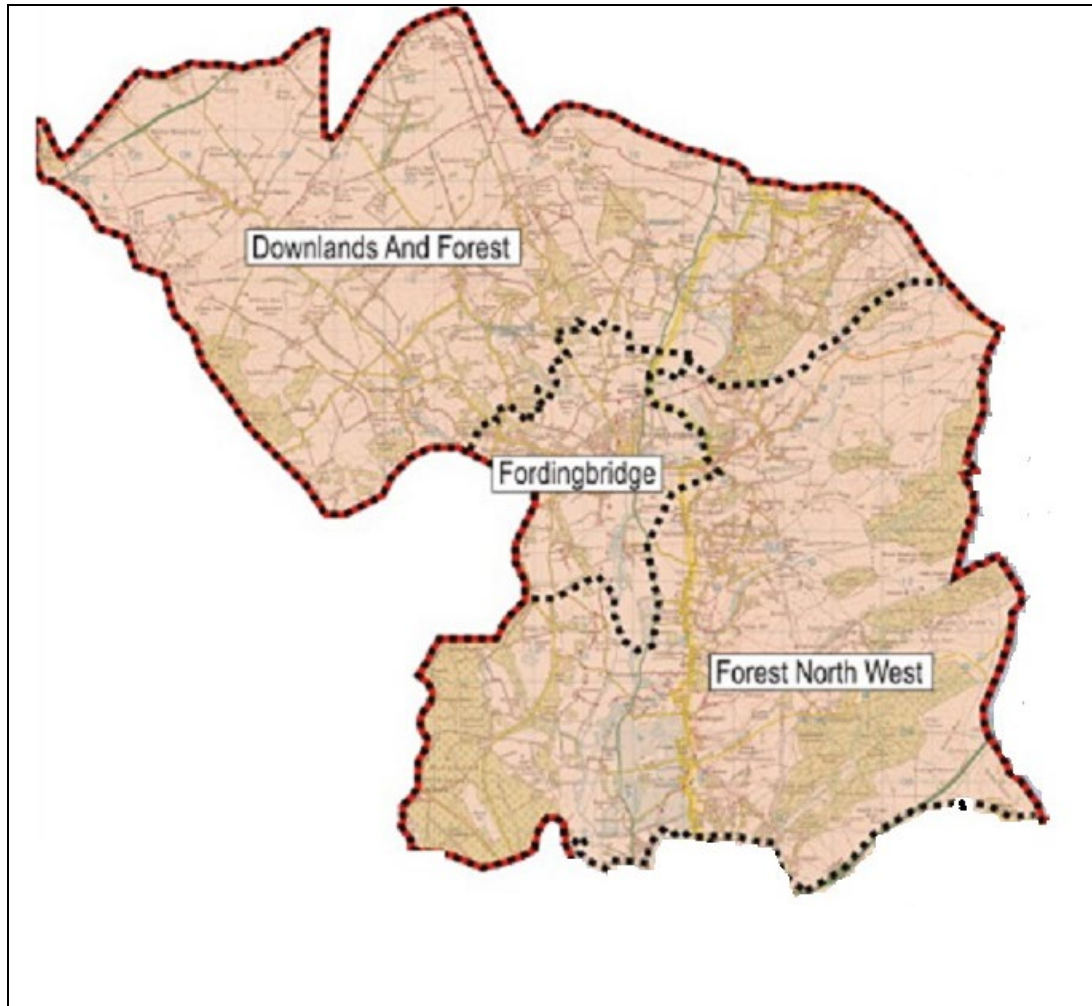
The repairs to the town hall are a priority and these will take place during the current year. A review is currently taking place to see whether alterations to the amount of office accommodation are viable in order to make better use of the Town Hall facilities and make savings in the medium term.

The new buildings manager will work with the Council to prepare a medium term building plan to ensure that all property is appropriately maintained.

The full accounts will be available for inspection once the internal audit has inspected them – please contact the office for more information.

*Martine Coatham, Responsible Financial Officer
April 2019*

Fordingbridge Team Area Map



Meet The Team



PS Helen Mitchley



PC Tom Neale



PCSO Lauran Willder



PCSO Steve May

Crime Tree	April 2018 - March 2019	April 2017 - March 2018	Difference	Difference %
1a Homicide		1	-1	-100.00%
1b Violence with Injury	38	41	-3	-7.32%
1c Violence without Injury	38	51	-13	-25.49%
2a Rape	5	6	-1	-16.67%
2b Other Sexual Offences	3	6	-3	-50.00%
4a1 Burglary Residential	26	36	-10	-27.78%
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	13	9	4	44.44%
4b Vehicle Offences	17	43	-26	-60.47%
4c Theft from the Person	1	1	0	0.00%
4d Bicycle Theft	3	4	-1	-25.00%
4e Shoplifting	4	7	-3	-42.86%
4f All Other Theft Offences	47	37	10	27.03%
5a Criminal Damage	32	51	-19	-37.25%
5b Arson	1	3	-2	-66.67%
6a Trafficking of Drugs	2		2	-100.00%
6b Possession of Drugs	6	1	5	500.00%
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	2	2	0	0.00%
8 Public Order Offences	18	31	-13	-41.94%
9 Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	9	7	2	28.57%
Sum:	265	337	-72	-21.36%

Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	April 2018 - March 2019	April 2017 - March 2018	Difference	Difference %
Residential Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	9	9	0	0.00%

Crime Tree	January 2019 - April 2019	October 2018 - December 2018	Difference	Difference %
1b Violence with Injury	8	9	-1	-0.11%
1c Violence without Injury	8	7	1	14.29%
2a Rape	1	2	-1	-0.50%
2b Other Sexual Offences	1	1	0	0.00%
4a1 Burglary Residential	3	8	-5	-0.63%
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	6	2	4	200.00%
4b Vehicle Offences	3	5	-2	-0.40%
4c Theft from the Person	1		1	-1.00%
4f All Other Theft Offences	13	10	3	30.00%
5a Criminal Damage	9	5	4	80.00%
5b Arson	1		1	-1.00%
6a Trafficking of Drugs	2		2	-1.00%
6b Possession of Drugs	1	2	-1	-0.50%
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	2		2	-1.00%
8 Public Order Offences	4	4	0	0.00%
9 Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	1	4	-3	-0.75%
Sum:	64	59	5	8.47%

Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	January 2019 - April 2019	October 2018 - December 2018	Difference	Difference %
Residential Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	1	2	1	-50.00%

Hampshire and Isle of Wight	April 2018 - April 2019	April 2017 - April 2018	Difference	Difference %
Sum:	159,603	159,306	297	0.19%

Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	April 2018 - April 2019	April 2017 - April 2018	Difference	Difference %
Residential Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	4,126	4,063	-63	-1.53%

New Forest	April 2018 - April 2019	April 2017 - April 2018	Difference	Difference %
Sum:	108,04	109,58	-154	-1.41%

Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	April 2018 - April 2019	April 2017 - April 2018	Difference	Difference %
Residential Burglary (excluding sheds/garages)	393	312	-81	-20.61%