

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 24th July 2019 at 7.30pm in the Victoria Rooms (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

Present: Cllr Adams – Chair;
Cllrs Anstey, Earth, Hale, Jackson, Lewendon, Paton, Perkins, & Wilson

In attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer (RFO)
6 Members of the Fordingbridge Events Group

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Goldsmith, Moulard and White

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Cllrs Adams declared a pecuniary interest in item no. 5 Monies Collected and Payment of Accounts as a supplier to the Council and would remain in the room but not speak or vote.

10. To receive a report on Christmas Lights 2020 and beyond

It was decided to move item 10 forward in the meeting.

Cllr Perkins entered the meeting.

The RFO had met with Ian Newman and the Events Group on 8th July 2019 to discuss the future of the Christmas lights. She had subsequently circulated a report which had been revised by Ian Newman to include post-meeting financial amendments and re-circulated to the Council and the Events Group for consideration.

Ian Newman's report suggested additional one-off costs as detailed below. These are extra to the £13,000 annual contracted cost of the Christmas lights.

- £5000 - new pole and socket for the Market Square (£2500 of which is already secured)
- £9000 - converting existing lights to LEDs
- £8500 - extending the scheme to include Shaftesbury Street and Provost Street
- £1500 – three new poles in Salisbury Street as Caxton House failed stress testing and therefore cannot be used as an anchor point for lights

It is thought that the above figures do not include VAT.

The RFO pointed out that if Hampshire County Council's minimum height requirements for lights increase, then Fordingbridge may not be able to anchor lights from buildings in the town. She also advised that many pavements in the town are narrow and therefore it may not be possible to install poles.

There was concern on all sides that the costs associated with Christmas Lights could increase without measure.

The Events Group suggested that before going out to tender, it was decided exactly what Christmas lights were needed in the town. They confirmed they would be making a donation towards the lights, but did not specify an amount.

There is uncertainty over who owns the Christmas lights (as previously the installation of the lights had been undertaken by the Rotary Club with IN Newman) but it is thought that Ian Newman owns approximately 60% of them and Fordingbridge Town Council owns the remainder. Ian Newman stores the lights free of charge.

It was noted that the order for the pole in the Market Square must be made by the end of August if it were to be used this year.

The RFO advised that putting together a tender process was very time consuming; as staff time is limited, this may not be achieved in the next few months without additional resource.

Cllr Paton suggested the setting up of a working party in order to progress this further.

All members of the Fordingbridge Events Group left the meeting.

The RFO advised that the current Christmas Lights contract currently costs £13k per annum. Previous tenders have indicated that by not using a local company, the costs would increase significantly.

The general consensus amongst members was that they did not want to spend any more than the current £13k (plus inflation) and to see what could be achieved for that money.

A tender would be written for a four year period. Any contributions from the Events Group ideally need to be committed over the same length of time.

The working party would comprise of Cllrs Adams, Anstey, Hale, Jackson and Paton. Two members of the Fordingbridge Events Group would be invited to join the working party.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26th June 2019 and report any matters arising

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26th June 2019 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters Arising

Minute number 12 – Following the meetings of the Amenities and General Purposes committees in which they discussed their respective areas of the forward plan, Cllr Jackson proposed that a small working party should be set up in order to progress the forward plan.

Minute number 14 – The RFO advised that the changing the bank signatories couldn't be done online.

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

No matters raised.

5. To receive details of Monies Collected & Payment of Accounts

Income: The RFO noted the kiosk lease payment has been received. Playscheme fees have been received this month; there are no grants towards the playscheme this year.

Expenditure: non-regular items include:

- Ringwood Town Council – annual maintenance contract for grounds (£5016.88)
- CloDesign – feather flag for festival use (£198)
- Abbas Cabins – toilets for Rec during repair works (£228)
- Witshire Groundworks – drainage repair works (£1249)
- Normans Heating – bungalow boiler (£2067.60)
- HCC welfare report (£274.20) – for traveller encampment
- Court fee (£226) – for traveller encampment
- IN Newman – memorial plaque (£955.20)
- Sheerin Bettle Architecture – second stage payment during Town Hall works (£3300), agreed fee
- Richards Construction and Property – buildings management £487.50 (£137.50 Changing rooms and £350 Town Hall work)

- Jarrett Scaffolding (£324) – chamber scaffold during works
- Glasdon – replacement bin (£516.53)
- Discovery Play (£1020) – installation of springers
- Sage (£201) – annual licence fee – this will need to increase to pay for new licence for Making Tax Digital requirements (RFO to confirm)
- RoSPA annual inspections (£609)

The RFO advised that an invoice for £1620 from the lengthsman had been received after the reports had been prepared and would also be paid, and the display board poster costs of £120 (for the festival stand).

Cllr Perkins asked if anyone had followed up about the newly installed memorial plaque which is corroding. Members asked the RFO not to make payment for the plaque.

Action: Town Clerk to resolve with the suppliers of the plaque.

6. To consider grant applications under Section 137

- Turn Up For Fun (TUFF)
Cllr Earth proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of a £500 grant to TUFF. All in favour.
- Citizens Advice New Forest
It was decided to defer this decision until after the manager of Ringwood and Fordingbridge Citizens Advice had given his presentation at the General Council meeting on 7th August.

7. To receive any Finance & Policy matters referred from sub-committees:

Nothing referred.

8. To receive a report on the Town Hall building works and borrowing

Following a monthly site meeting last week, work which was scheduled to conclude on 31 August is likely to overrun by a week. The decorators have commenced work and the roof is being re-tiled. The scaffolding is likely to commence being taken down in the week beginning 5th August.

The Public Works Loan application was submitted by the Hampshire Association of Local Councils to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government. The Town Clerk received the Ministry's comments on the application yesterday.

The Ministry is satisfied regarding:

- The resolution to borrow
- The submitted budgets
- The consultation with the general public

The Ministry is partly satisfied regarding:

- The business case
- The loan affordability

The Ministry primarily needs additional information regarding the works and timeframes. They have asked for a response by 9th August but the Town Clerk would be looking to address all their queries this week.

9. To receive a report from the Clerk about the Sports Pavilion

The Buildings Manager was asked whether he could manage the refurbishment of the Pavilion in-house. He did not feel he could do so but is preparing an assessment of the likely refurbishment costs of the Pavilion based upon the drawing previously prepared.

Brightspace Architects have offered to do some work pro bono for the Town Council. This will include:

- Developing the brief
- Agreeing a strategy

- Producing sketch proposals
- Producing a room by room schedule of works
- Meet with the rugby and football clubs
- Consult with planners
- Speak to local contractors to obtain a budget based on the sketch drawings and schedule of works.

The Town Clerk has asked Brightspace Architects whether he could attend a further meeting with them together with the Buildings Manager.

Separately, the Town Clerk and the Buildings Manager met with HP Contracts at the Pavilion. This meeting had been arranged prior to Brightspace Architects' proposal. HP Contracts will produce a proposal including drawings and an estimate of costs. This could take a number of weeks.

The Town Clerk met with both the rugby club and the football club and the initial view at the meeting was, subject to addressing the issue of storage, the existing drawings retaining the existing footprint represented a considerable improvement to the current offering. The Clerk has subsequently received comments confirming this and also setting out ideal requirements for the changing rooms in terms of toilets, basins, taps and showers.

10. To receive a report on Christmas Lights 2020 and beyond

Discussed earlier in meeting.

11. Hampshire Pension Fund – Employer Grouping Arrangements – feedback and review

It was agreed to stay in the Town and Parish Council pension pool, rather than electing to be given an individual contribution rate.

12. To approve revised Standing Orders and Bank Signatory arrangements

This item was deferred until August.

13. To note any items of correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

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

There was nothing further to report.

15. To note the date of the next meeting as 28th August 2019

The meeting closed at 8:47pm