

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 26th June 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, Moulard, Paton, Perkins, White & Wilson

In attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer (RFO)
No members of the public

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Goldsmith

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.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29th May 2019 and report any matters arising

Cllr Moulard proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th May 2019 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters Arising – there were no matters arising to be noted.

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

There were no members of the public present.

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

See Appendix A for the Finance Officer's summary of the June 2019 accounts. The RFO advised that she had updated the schedule previously circulated to members to include the second valuation from the Town Hall contractors, K&B Building (revised figure), Elliotts (scalpings), Asbury Heating (changing rooms boiler service), BT Onebill (amount being queried as does not match the original quotes), Matt Bright Ltd (padding pool paving slab repairs) and TLC (domain renewal for website).

Income: The RFO noted the final grant has been received from NFDC towards the skate park, the camping income had been received from the Whippet Club and Playscheme income was starting to come in.

Expenditure: non-regular items include:

- Sheerin Bettle Architecture – first stage payment during TH works (£3380.60), agreed fee.
- Richards Construction & Property – buildings management £250 (£62.50 skate park, £187.5 TH work)
- Franking Shipping (£218.40) and Jarrett Scaffolding (£324) – paintings storage and chamber scaffold during works
- Sullivans Sparkle clean – annual clean of changing rooms prior to camping event
- STN – final invoice to make good the meter box on the outside of the old toilet block (supply not yet sorted) £415.20
- South Coast Medics - £265 – first aid cover for skate park jam
- Dixon & Templeton – fee for VIC lease renewal £264
- L Seaward – various works to changing rooms taps and toilets £521.11
- NFDC dog bins – first six months £1195.91
- Simoney – 12 members badges £106.20
- Central Southern Security – alarm reset (panic button knocked) £54

- K&B builders £40732.32 second valuation
- Gazebo £169.98 – used for skate park jam and festival
- SSE – large bill and credit note for kiosk block (no meter reading originally taken) – now in line with forecast

Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Llewendon and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the June 2019 accounts. All in favour.

6. To receive a report following Internal Audit (annual accounts 2018/2019)

The internal audit reports (interim and final) had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The points raised were reviewed and noted by members. The main issue is that the 2018/19 audit will be qualified as the AGAR for 2017/18 was approved by F&P rather than at General Council. Other items raised:

- Bank mandate to be revised (see minute 14 for action)
- Budget approval AND precept approval noted
- Standing Orders have been revised
- Christmas lighting balance has been written off (was the subject of an insurance claim)
- Insurance cost now allocated to correct year
- External Audit concluded
- CIL reserve and policy now established
- Ticket sales (commission) accounted for appropriately on Sage
- Value of contracts to be noted in the minutes (noted and agreed)
- Bank reconciliations to be signed off by Chair at year end (noted)
- Staff pay rates schedule requires signature – noted
- Asset register to be updated – noted
- End of year petty cash to be signed by Town Clerk – noted

These points were noted by members and actions will be taken as required.

7. To approve the Annual Governance Statement and Annual Accounting Statements for 2018/19

A draft copy of the AGAR for 2018/19 had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. The RFO noted that item 3 of the annual governance statement would need to be “No” and a reason given (as per the internal audit report).

A copy of all the additional reports required are available from the RFO (bank statement reconciliation, explanation of differences). These detail the difference between the figures for 2017/18 and 2018/19. The main differences are due to increased staff costs (during transition of two members of staff and increased hours) and the cost of the skate park and town hall works.

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the Annual Governance Statement for 2018/19 to General Council.

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth and therefore **RESOLVED** to recommend approval of the Annual Accounting Statements for 2018/19 to General Council.

8. To consider grant applications under Section 137

Cllr Adams suggested that the grant application of Fordingbridge Choral Society did not meet the criteria of the Town Council’s grants policy. Cllrs also noted that unlike previous years no funds had been raised by the society. Cllr Adams suggested that the Council should politely decline the application and that the grant policy should be sent out to any organisation that is looking to apply for a grant.

Cllrs then considered the application of Two Bridges Care Group for £300. The RFO advised Cllrs that this was the first time this group had applied for a grant. Cllr Hale suggested that this was a good cause and that the Cllrs should approve the grant applied for. Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr White and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the payment of a £300 grant to Two Bridges Group. All in favour.

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

General Purposes Extraordinary meeting 26.06.19 – Replacement boiler for the Memorial Bungalow quotes.

The RFO noted that the General Purposes committee had approved a quote from Normans Heating for a replacement boiler in the sum of £1,723 plus VAT. Cllr Adams asked Cllrs to consider the recommendation of the General Purposes committee. Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Jackson and therefore **RESOLVED** to approve the recommendation of the General Purposed committee to accept the quote from Normans Heating.

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

The Clerk reported that the work on the Town Hall schedule was running to schedule. The second invoice for works in the sum of £32,246 had been received. The architects have suggested that, whilst it is not in the original specification of works, this was a suitable time to put in insulation. A quote for this work had been submitted by K&B Builders in the sum of £5.5k and this would be met from the contingency element of their tender. Cllrs agreed that this work should be included within the contract.

The Clerk advised that further information had been submitted to HALC regarding the consultation process in support of the PWLB loan. HALC had advised that they believed that this demonstrated adequate consultation. The Town Council will now resubmit the application to HALC which they will submit to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for consideration. This could take up to four weeks.

The Clerk advised that the Council's buildings manager and the architect had raised concerns regarding the state of the rear of the Town Hall roof and had suggested that the work could be undertaken concurrently with the ongoing work, K&B Builders had submitted a quote for the work in the sum of £50,000. Cllrs discussed the work required and how it could be funded. The RFO advised that if a PWLB loan was needed to fund the work and this resulted in an increase in precept then a 'Yes/No' consultation would be required. Cllrs considered whether additional planning consent would be needed for the work and considered whether additional quotes should be obtained. Cllrs agreed to hold off making a decision regarding the recommended work until further information was available.

Action: The Town Clerk to obtain further information regarding the recommended work

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

The Clerk advised that he and Cllr Jackson had met with Brightspace architects who had advised that they had the capacity and experience to work on the proposed refurbishment. Brightspace had recommended that the Town Council should discuss with the Football and Ruby clubs their requirements. The RFO and Clerk had met with representatives of the Football Club that day and a meeting was scheduled with representatives of the Rugby Club on 3rd July. Separately, as the Town Council would be required to obtain three quotes before engaging an architect, the RFO and Clerk had met with Favonius architects at the Pavilion earlier in the week. Favonius are going to formally provide the Town Council with a proposal but their initial assessment was that it could cost up to £300,000 to refurbish the Pavilion using the existing footprint. Sheerin Bettle have proposed a meeting at the Pavilion when they are next inspecting the Town Hall work.

Cllr Jackson suggested that the indicative figure from Favonius was significantly overstated. The RFO advised that when a refurbishment and extension of the Pavilion was previously looked at the estimated cost was £500,000 which was in line with Favonius' initial estimate if an extension was also going to be undertaken. The RFO advised that, under standing orders, the Council should be obtaining three quotes. At this stage three quotes for drawings and a proposal regarding the refurbishment are being sought. Cllrs discussed whether it was necessary to have an architect draw up plans, whether building control sign off was required for a refurbishment, whether plans were required or could a schedule of works to provide to a builder was sufficient and whether the plans previously drawn up could be used. Cllr Mouland suggested that the Councils building manager could potentially manage the project negating the need to engage an architect. Cllrs considered whether Cllr Jackson and Cllr Mouland should manage the project. Cllrs agreed in the first instance that the buildings manager should be contacted to establish whether he could manage the project.

Action: Town Clerk to contact the building manager.

12. To consider a report from the RFO about Forward Planning, the Asset Register and S106/CIL Funding

The RFO referred to the draft forward plan that she had previously circulated and suggested that Cllrs should consider setting up a working party to go through the plan and come up with recommendations. Cllr Lewendon suggested that each committee should look at their respective areas. Cllr Jackson suggested that Cllrs were elected for a four year term and that there should be a four year plan taking the RFO's plan and adding to it. Cllrs considered who should be on the working party and how it could work. Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Moulard and therefore **RESOLVED** that in the first instance each committee should look at their respective areas and identify what is required when they meet on 17th July.

13. To consider the changes to the LGPS

The Town Clerk advised Cllrs that correspondence had been received from HALC regarding proposed changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). Currently Town and Parish Councils are grouped in the same fund as District and County Councils. The proposal is for Town and Parish councils to be grouped together and no longer be part of a bigger group including District and County Councils. This means that future deficit payments would be calculated across a smaller group. The planned contributions would not change and any transfer of employees to the Town Council would be fully funded. The Town Council should continue their ongoing membership of the scheme given the proposed changes. However, if the Town Council was to leave the scheme or not offer the scheme to new employees there would potentially be HR implications to manage. Cllrs discussed the implications of not offering the scheme to new employees and the difference between the LGPS and other schemes. Cllr Jackson thought it would be problematic to have staff in different schemes and the Council should continue as things are. Cllr Adams advised that there was no need to make a decision at this time but the implications of the changes should be looked into further.

14. To approve revised Standing Orders and Bank Signatory arrangements

The RFO advised that at present there are three cheque signatories on or employed by the Town Council; the RFO, Cllr Perkins and Cllr Adams. Currently the RFO has sole capability for electronic payments. The RFO suggested that there should be two new cheque signatories (ideally who already bank with Lloyds Bank) and that the Town Council should have dual authorisation for electronic payments with at least three authorised users. The internal auditor doesn't think the Council's current electronic payment structure is compliant. The Town Clerk advised whilst there were checks currently in place those checks were retrospective. The RFO advised that the proposed changes would require standing orders to be amended. Cllrs Jackson and Anstey indicated that they were happy to be authorised signatories. The RFO is to look at setting up dual authorisation with the RFO, the Clerk and Cllr Jackson as users.

15. To note any items of correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

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

The Town Clerk reported that the drainage at the kiosk had been fixed. Cllr Jackson raised the matter of Christmas lights as November/December is fast approaching. Cllr Jackson suggested that the current lights were outdated and queried whether it was necessary to replace the lighting pole if it would only be needed for the remaining year on the Council's current contract. The RFO advised that the business forum representative was currently looking to raise the funds for the pole and that the press release drafted by the RFO was on hold while he went through that process. The RFO also advised that hanging baskets were made and at the very least the Town Council's basket should be put up. Cllrs discussed working with the representative of the business forum regarding both the Christmas lights and the hanging baskets. The RFO advised that we have one year left on the current contract for Christmas Lights and that there two separate issues, what the Council can do for the lights this year and longer term what the Council wants to do. Cllrs discussed issuing the press release.

Cllr Adams agreed to talk to the representative about both the Christmas lights and the provision of hanging baskets.

17. To note the date of the next meeting as 24th July 2019

It was agreed to hold the next meeting on 24th July (rather than 31st July). The meeting closed at 8:50pm