

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 26th February 2020 at 7.30pm in the Town Hall (Minutes subject to approval at the next meeting of the Committee)

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

In attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, Finance Officer (RFO)

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr White.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were made:

Cllr 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.

[Cllr Paton entered the meeting]

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 29th January 2020 and report any matters arising

Cllr Mouland proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 29th January 2020 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising:

Agenda point 16 – Climate Change Policy

Cllr Wilson wished to arrange a meeting regarding trees and also commented on opportunities to improve the Town Council's buildings from an environmental perspective. Cllr Jackson commented on ways individuals could reduce their carbon footprint.

Agenda point 13 – Asset Register

The RFO advised that she and the Clerk had recently met with the former Clerk to discuss the almshouses and are awaiting information from the solicitor that has dealt with the almshouses to clarify the obligations and responsibilities of the Town Council.

4. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19th February 2020 and report any matters arising

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the meeting held on the 19th February 2020 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

No matters arising.

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

No matters raised.

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

The RFO reported that allotment income had started coming in and that £1,000 has been received from the Co-Operative as a donation towards skate park lights. Regarding expenditure, the RFO noted the cost of servicing four boilers: £360; the balancing payment for the Council Chamber curtains and blinds: £587.11; the cost of the EICR reports on the bungalow and workshop: £420; and the cost of attending the Town Hall to inspect the guttering and unblock the down pipe: £804. The RFO advised that the Town Council was likely to be £45k to £50k over budget primarily due to the work on the Town Hall roof which was only partly funded by the PWLB loan of £110,000.

7. To consider grant applications under Section 137

No grant applications received

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

There were no matters referred from sub-committees.

9. To receive a report on building matters

The Pavilion refurbishment: The Clerk advised plans had been produced for three options in relation to the refurbishment of the Pavilion. **Option 1** was BrightSpace architects initial plans which involved the refurbishment of both floors with a two storey extension and wrap-around external storage. This option had been costed at £304k by Tim Richards, the Town Council's buildings manager. **Option 3** involved stripping out as much cost as possible and utilised the existing footprint of the building. BrightSpace had estimated, based upon Tim Richards' cost schedule, that this would reduce the estimated cost of the refurbishment work considerably. This scaled back option would involve no work on the first floor and it would involve losing the two proposed public toilets and the match officials downstairs changing room. It would also impact on the safeguarding aspect of one of the four changing rooms due to the position of the existing fire escape. **Option 3** involves a small ground floor extension and involves no work on the first floor but allows for the ground floor design of Option 1 to be implemented. Tim Richards is currently looking at the likely cost of this option. Storage is an issue so it may well be necessary to consider using the old toilet block as storage. The Clerk advised that he is continuing to liaise with the NFDC regarding the s106 funds allocated, that the architects had understandably reached a point where they could no longer continue working pro bono and he suggested that it may be that, having agreed on a way forward that discussions should perhaps commence with builders or a tender process should be considered. Cllrs discussed whether it would be possible to extend upwards at a later date if Option 2 was the preferred choice, how the work might be funded, whether there was sufficient information to go out to builders and how the work might be undertaken within the required timeframe. The RFO said if the work wasn't funded from the s106 funds allocated to the Recreation Ground the work could still be funded from CIL. The RFO also acknowledged the pro bono work undertaken by the architects but said if the architects were going to be retained for paid work going forward the Council will need to ensure that their instruction does not contravene any of the Council's financial regulations. Cllrs also discussed whether costs could be managed by engaging local trade professionals, the tender process, the requirement to engage architects to take the project forward, the timing of the work and the use of the building by the football, rugby and whippet clubs and its use at the Summer Festival. Cllr Anstey proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED:** that in order to meet the safeguarding issues that the Council should look to proceed with Option 2. Cllrs discussed the need for storage and the potential to use the old toilet block as storage for the sports clubs. Cllr Anstey commented that it was the Council's view that if the block was not required for storage then it should be knocked down and replaced with a band stand. The RFO said the Council should consider whether it has an obligation to provide separate storage free of charge or whether storage should be paid for. Cllr Jackson said if the sports clubs want storage then that would be good use of the block. Cllrs considered the previous discussions with the rugby club about how the use of the block as storage might be structured and Cllr Mouland advised that he would come back with the view of the sports clubs.

Recreation Ground toilet block (the kiosk) and the paddling pool: Tim Richards has been tasked with producing a proposal for future works for these facilities to be considered by the Council.

10. Christmas Lights and Events Group update

The RFO said the Council chose to provide Christmas Lights but there is no legal obligation for the Town Council to do so. The RFO and the Clerk had recently met with Ian Newman to discuss the provision of Christmas Lights. An initial draft tender document had been produced that the RFO had updated to seek expressions of interest by the end of March. The purpose is to establish what the light options are and what the likely cost will be so the Council can consider these and how they might be funded. Cllr Jackson queried whether the Council position was that it was committed to funding the lights. The Clerk advised that at this stage there was no commitment from the Council it was just a case of establishing what the options for lights were.

11. To approve the following policies:

- **Complaints**
- **Safeguarding Grievance**

The RFO advised that the Information Office staff had done an amazing job updating policies referencing HALC and NALC policy documents. Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: to approve the Complaints and Safeguarding policies. All in favour.

The RFO advised that the updated CIL policy would need to be considered and ratified at the next Finance and Policy Committee meeting. The RFO was required to update and submit the CIL policy to the NFDC setting out in the appendix what CIL funds had been received, how those funds had been used and what the proposal was to utilise the balance of funds held.

12. To note any items of correspondence.

The Clerk advised that a card had been received thanking Cllrs for their donation to the Stroke Club.

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

Noting to report.

14. To note the date of the next meeting as 25th March 2020

The meeting closed at 8:19 pm