

## **FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the Finance & Policy Committee held on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020 at 7.30pm**  
held remotely using appropriate technology in accordance with The Local Authorities and Police  
and Crimes Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel  
Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (“the 2020 Regulations”) which came into force  
on 4th April 2020

**(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, White & Wilson

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

### **1. To elect a chair**

Cllr Lewendon proposed Cllr Adams as chair and it was seconded by Cllr Earth

Cllr White proposed Cllr Jackson as chair and it was seconded by Cllr Mouland

There were no other nominations

[Cllr Goldsmith joined the meeting]

Cllrs **RESOLVED:** to elect Cllr Adams as chair for the forthcoming year with the incumbent chair exercising his casting vote after six votes were cast for each proposed Cllr.

### **2. To elect a vice chair**

Cllr Hale proposed Cllr Jackson as vice chair and it was seconded by Cllr Adams

There were no other nominations

Cllrs **RESOLVED:** to elect Cllr Jackson as vice chair for the forthcoming year. All in favour.

### **3. To receive any apologies for absence**

No apologies received

### **4. To receive any Declarations of Interest**

The following declarations of interest were made:

Cllr Adams declared a pecuniary interest in item no. 7 Monies Collected and Payment of Accounts as a supplier to the Council and would remain in the room but not speak or vote.

### **5. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 and report any matters arising**

Cllr Hale proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on the 26<sup>th</sup> February 2020 be signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising:

Agenda point 3 – Cllr Jackson asked whether the Council had heard further regarding the almshouses. The Clerk advised that the solicitor was waiting to get the paperwork from his old firm.

**Action: Town Clerk to chase the solicitor for an update**

### **6. To receive any matters raised by Members of the Public**

No matters raised.

### **7. To receive details of Monies Collected & Payment of Accounts**

The RFO had provided details for March, April and May and asked whether Cllrs had any questions.

Cllr Jackson asked for details regarding the PWLB loan and the RFO provided details regarding the payments, the term and the interest rate.

### **8. To consider grant applications under Section 137**

No grant applications received

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

Cllrs noted the Playscheme was not taking place this year.

Cllr Adams referred to the quote for protective screens for the Information office for £480 plus VAT. The Clerk advised that it was considerably less than the alternative quote obtained of £1,800 plus VAT. Cllr Adams said that it was important that the Town Councils staff were kept safe and proposed to accept the quote of £480 plus VAT for the screens. All in favour.

Cllr Jackson raised the matter of the kiosk rent as he felt under the circumstances it would be right to cancel the current quarters rent. Cllr Adams agreed that would be fair. Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore RESOLVED: to cancel the current quarters rent for the kiosk. All in favour.

**10. To agree a quote from BrightSpace architects in relation to the proposed refurbishment of the Pavilion**

The Clerk advised that this was the quote for £3,500 plus VAT for drawings an enhanced schedule of works, dealing with building regulations and contractors. Cllr Mouland proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and therefore RESOLVED: to accept the quote from BrightSpace architects. All in favour.

**11. To approve the purchase of a ride on mower**

Cllr Goldsmith proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED: to approve the purchase of a ride on mower. All in favour. The Clerk advised that the supplier of the new mower had offered £750 for the Council's mower in part exchange.

**12. To receive a report on building matters:**

The Clerk advised that the architects had visited the Pavilion again today and had advised that it should be possible to go out to tender late Summer so there may be a window to get the refurbishment work completed this year.

The Town Council staff have had further discussions with Sheerin Bettle architects regarding the proposed internal works to the Town Hall and the architects are going to revise their proposal based on those discussions.

The Council is waiting for Tim Richards thoughts as to how the kiosk toilets could be enhanced. Regarding the old toilet block the Clerk has had discussions with a representative of the Men's shed who has since provided a proposal for the old toilet block (subject to its use not being required for storage by the sports clubs) to consider at General Council next week,

The Clerk advised that a quote had been received from a contractor for a complete re-lay of the slabs around the paddling pool and we are awaiting a second quote from the contractor to just re-lay the loose slabs and repoint where required. The Clerk met a second contractor who is going to quote for re-laying the loose slabs, repointing and to render the cracks in the pool and repaint the pool. The second contractor advised that if it was decided to re-lay all of the slabs and render the whole pool his advice was that it should be done by one specialist pool contractor.

**13. Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 – internal audit and revised dates**

The RFO advised that dates have been pushed back and Public Rights was now 1 September and regarding the Annual Governance and Accountability Return the Council now has to 30 September to submit it but the Council needs to have the internal audit first.

**14. Neighbourhood Plan – to agree budget, grants and expenditure**

Cllr Jackson reported that there was interest in producing a map so people could understand the development that was likely to take place and its impact. BrightSpace architects have advised that the licence fee for the map information is £630 and their proposed fee to produce the map is £1,200. The RFO advised that this could not come from CIL but could be met from general reserves, out of the allocated budget for professional fees or from the Neighbourhood Plan grant. The RFO advised that £14,000 was put in the forward plan for the Neighbourhood Plan including the £9,000 grant and asked whether that was felt to be a realistic budget. Cllr Jackson advised that the Council was now in a position to put together a more detailed budget but he did not envisage the costs to be much more than the figure in the forward plan. Cllr Jackson undertook to produce a costed budget albeit there would need to be some assumption and advised he would try and produce it prior to the next

General Council meeting, Cllr Wilson raised the issue of taking a survey of residents' views. The RFO has been looking at survey platforms. Cllr Wilson felt that obtaining residents views should not just form part of the Neighbourhood Plan process but it should be progressed quickly so that we can also present residents' views to the NFDC. Cllr Adams enquired about the new website and the Clerk advised that he would establish when this was likely to be up and running.

#### **15. Christmas Lights and Events Group update**

The RFO advised that the window for expressions of interest regarding the Christmas Lights has been extended to the end of June. As part of this process it has emerged that some of our current fixing may not be compliant. The RFO is meeting an interested party this week. The RFO said due to the potential compliance concerns it may be that the town cannot have all of the lights in their current format but the expression of interest process should help establish what the Town Council can provide. The RFO advised that the expression of interest document was put on contracts finder and sent to around twenty companies. From her conversations, the RFO believes that we will receive a number of expressions of interest for consideration at the end of June but the coronavirus lock down had hampered contractors ability to undertake their normal due diligence.

#### **16. To approve the following policies**

- **CIL policy**

The RFO advised that the policy had not changed but the appendix that sets out what CIL has been used and the proposed future use of CIL needs to be reviewed and updated. Cllr Wilson raised the contribution to sports facilities at local schools that is currently in the appendix and queried when that had been agreed. The RFO advised that this was just one point on the overall policy that had been agreed by Cllrs and the RFO did not think it was the Council committing large sums of money. Cllr Wilson suggested that the Cllrs should review the proposed CIL expenditure and Cllr Jackson suggested that engagement with the public regarding the Neighbourhood Plan would also influence what should be included in the CIL policy. Cllr Jackson asked whether a meeting with the head of planning at the NFDC had been arranged and the Clerk advised that it had been provisionally arranged for 2<sup>nd</sup> June but he was waiting for confirmation of the details from the head of planning. Cllr Wilson suggested that a free survey should be undertaken to obtain the views of residents regarding the town's open spaces other than the Recreation Ground. Cllr Jackson said he would discuss this with the Neighbourhood Plan steering group and produce something to consider at the next General Council meeting. He asked Cllrs to pass any ideas that they might have to him.

#### **17. To note the increase in bank charges on the Council accounts**

The increase was on the RFO's April report but needed to be noted at a meeting, The RFO does not think that there are better banking options available. The monthly fee has gone up from £5 a month to £7 a month but in addition there are charges for issuing and banking cheques and cash. The number of cheques and cash can at times be high with the Playscheme and the allotments and the undertakers pay by cheque but the RFO will ask if they can pay online. Cllr Jackson said he had not received anything regarding being a dual signatory. The RFO said that he should have received something and she will look into it but this needs to all be in place before the dual activation is activated.

#### **18. To note any items of correspondence**

The RFO referred to correspondence from the NFDC previously circulated to Cllrs and said it did not give absolute comfort that the Town council would receive the full precept. The RFO will review her forecast month on month but currently she estimates that the Council is looking at a small overspend provided it receives the full precept.

#### **19. To receive a report from the Clerk or any other relevant business**

Cllr Paton raised the issue of some people using the play area even though it is closed. The Clerk advised that generally people had respected the closure, the ground staff are advising people of the position, signs have been put up and the tape and barrier fencing has been replaced when necessary. Cllr Paton agreed that generally people had been good about respecting the closure.

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**20. To note the date of the next meeting as 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020**

The meeting closed at 8:25 pm