

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 16th September 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 draft until approved at the following meeting of the Committee)

Present: Cllr Earth – Vice Chairman
Cllrs Adams, Goldsmith, Jackson & Lewendon

In Attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Cllrs Anstey, Moulard, Paton, Perkins & White (Public Gallery)
Three representatives from the Men’s Shed
Two members of the public

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hale and Wilson.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th July 2020 and report on any matters arising.

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and therefore **RESOLVED:** to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 15th July 2020 as a true record. All in favour.

No matters arising

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

A member of the public reported that weeds are growing from pavements in the town centre and said that made the town appear sad and drab. He asked that the Town Council put pressure on shopkeepers to tidy up their shop frontages, he also said that homeowners shouldn’t allow their hedges to grow over pavements.

The Clerk reported that NFDC have been spraying the weeds in the town over the past few days. Cllr Lewendon reported that several homeowners have allowed hedges to grow over pavements and asked that this be brought to the attention of the people of Fordingbridge, perhaps via the New Forest Journal.

Action: Clerk to speak to New Forest Journal

Action: Clerk to arrange for weeds around obelisk to be removed and the hedge blocking the pavement under the bridge on Southampton Road to be cut back.

Cllr Earth suggested organising a (socially distanced) working party to clear the weeds outside empty shops in the town centre.

5. To discuss the proposed lease agreement for the old toilet block

The Men’s Shed committee had emailed a proposed lease arrangement for the old toilet block in advance of the meeting, which members discussed.

Cllr Adams reported that the Men’s Shed committee would like other groups to be able to use the building, with the agreement of the Men’s Shed and the Town Council. Cllr Anstey

spoke from the public gallery and raised the matter of insurance. He said that the Town Council would pay the insurance on the building only and only hold the lease with the Men's Shed. If other groups were to use the building then the responsibility they were adequately insured would fall to the Men's Shed.

Cllr Anstey also spoke about the need for metered electricity and water and asked who would pay for the meters to be installed. He said that the lease drafted for the rugby club to use the building wasn't suitable for the Men's Shed and recommended it was rewritten. He said the Town Council would not be able to afford the cost of refurbishing the building to make it suitable for the Men's Shed to use.

Cllr Lewendon asked about the request for an area of land around the old toilet block (mainly to the north) to be included in the lease. The Men's Shed reported that if the venture was successful, then subject to planning permission and with permission from the Town Council, they may wish to extend or build a second building. They'd also like to have space available for tables or to carry out minor works outside.

The Men's Shed confirmed they would apply for grants and wouldn't expect the Town Council to pay for the refurbishment of the building. They asked for security of tenure, which they said is needed to qualify for grants. The Men's Shed asked that the Council charge the smallest amount they can tolerate for the lease, in order that the Men's Shed can keep membership fees as low as possible, to enable access to as wide a range of members as possible. They confirmed that they would do the work themselves to a high standard and under the supervision of the Town Council.

Cllr Adams proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Goldsmith and therefore **RESOLVED**: to draft a lease agreement for the old toilet block. All in favour.

The Clerk hoped that the lease could be drafted in time to be considered at the Finance and Policy meeting on 30th September.

The Men's Shed asked at which meeting they should present the architect's plans for the old toilet block. The Clerk confirmed that they should do this at the same time as applying for CIL funding at the Finance and Policy meeting on 28th October.

The three members of the Men's Shed left the meeting.

6. To report on any matters concerning St Marys Closed Churchyard and Stuckton Road Cemetery

The Clerk reported that a sign has been put up at the cemetery reminding people of the burial regulations in tending their plots.

7. Matters relating to the Town Hall

The Clerk reported that the builders are making good the defects following the inspection at the end of the defects liability period. Sheerin Bettle Architecture will then inspect the work.

The Clerk reported that on the 24th September Sheerin Bettle Architecture will meet the Conservation Officer as part of the pre-application advice process. He said there is a potential grant which may be available for using greener technologies such as photo voltaic on the rear of roof.

8. To report on any matters relating to the Information Office

Noting to report.

9. To report any matters concerning footpaths

- Jobs for Lengthsman – 2nd October 2020

Councillors asked that the footpaths (pavements) in the town be weeded. Cllr Goldsmith reported that the old newsagent's shop frontage needed repair and the rear was overgrown too.

The Clerk reported that the Town Council has received a petition signed by 19 residents of Riverside Place, asking the Council to reconsider the removal of their privacy to the river. They said that if this area is open to the public, people park there to go shopping and some dump rubbish there. These residents would like the removal of the Augustus John statue and also suggested signs and maps to direct people to the Recreation Ground and to the nearby villages. It has been suggested that some residents of Riverside Place were unaware that the council had the right to remove the privacy of the river at the time that they bought the properties.

Separately, other residents in the town are keen that the transfer of land to the NFDC is progressed expeditiously. They are concerned that NFDC have not progressed this transfer as quickly as possible and wrote asking if the Mayor and the Town Council could put pressure on NFDC to do this. These residents view this area as a beneficial open space on this bank of the river that should be open and available to the public. They have started their own petition, petitioning for the expeditious transfer of the land to the New Forest District Council. They also expressed concerns that the Town Council may not be fully aware of the complaints received from members of the public trying to enjoy that space, which culminated in an article in the New Forest Journal.

The Clerk has made NFDC aware of both petitions and concerns raised.

10. Matters concerning Highways

- **Parking at Provost Street**

A member of public has reported visibility issues on exiting Highbank Gardens onto Provost Street due to vehicles parked on double yellow lines on Provost Street. He said it is impossible to see any oncoming traffic. This has been reported to Hampshire Highways.

Cllr Perkins said that the Provost Street situation has been going on for the past two or three years. He said HCC have employed traffic wardens but they don't come often enough and people do as they wish. Cllr Lewendon reported that parking on Salisbury Street is also an ongoing problem.

Action: Clerk to contact Cllr Heron about the parking problems on Provost Street and Salisbury Street

- **Condition of High Street and Salisbury Street**

A complaint has been received regarding the condition of the road surface on the High Street and Salisbury Street. A member of the public reported that he thought these two roads must be the most dangerous roads in Hampshire, or possibly the country and that someone is going to be seriously injured or at worse killed. The road condition has been reported to Hampshire Highways.

- **Access to bus stops at Bickton**

A resident emailed today to say that the bus stops at Bickton are difficult to access due to uneven ground along the verge of the A338. He asked if a short path could be laid to the bus stops to make access easier and safer.

Cllr Lewendon (Chair of the Transport Committee) agreed this needed doing. He thought these works could be incorporated in the proposals he has made for the CIL money for bus stops and shelters. Cllr Lewendon said that several of these stops are unpleasant if you try catching a bus from there in anything other than perfect weather. He reported that the bus stop at Redbrook Cottages is very similar – to get from Redbrook Cottages themselves is 40 or 50 yards and there is no pavement.

11. Matters concerning Allotments

The Clerk reported that the AGM will not be held this year due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Instead prize winners will be photographed collecting their awards at the Information Office and photographs will appear in the allotment newsletter.

12. To note any items of correspondence

There were no items of correspondence.

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

Nothing further to report.

14. To note the date of the next meeting as 18th November 2020

The meeting finished at 8.14pm.