

**FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL**

**Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 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 Council)**

**Present:** Cllr Hale – Chairman  
Cllrs Adams, Anstey, Earth, Jackson, Lewendon, Mouland, Paton, Perkins and Wilson

**In Attendance:** Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk  
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk  
Cllr Sevier (NFDC)  
Cllr Bellows (NFDC)  
Ruth Crocker, Footpath Officer  
Cllr Partridge, Sandleheath Parish Council  
A reporter from the Salisbury Journal

**1. To receive any apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Goldsmith and White.

**2. To receive any Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest.

**3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 and to report on any matters arising**

Cllr Paton proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Mouland and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 are signed as a true record.

Matters arising

Agenda item 10 – The Clerk reported that he had written to HCC raising concerns about people jumping from the bridge and requesting a sign warning of the dangers. He is awaiting a reply.

Agenda item 10 – The Clerk reported that Wessex Water will send someone out to look at the settlement of the ground at Whitsbury Road.

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

Cllr Partridge enquired about plans for Remembrance Sunday this year. The Clerk reported that there would be no formal service at the Memorial Gates this year due to Covid-19 but that Rev Gary Philbrick is recording a service which will be broadcast online from 10.50am on Remembrance Sunday. The Clerk confirmed there would still be the opportunity to lay wreaths and crosses at the Memorial Gates throughout the day.

**Action: Clerk to forward details of online service to Cllr Partridge**

**5. To receive a report on any matters under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act**

No report received.

## **6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor**

The Mayor gave the following report.

*On Saturday 31st October I visited the new skatepark floodlights with the fundraising group leader, and a reporter from the Journal. It was good to see the new lights completing the skatepark project.*

*My thanks to all the Councillors who attended our Forward Planning meeting on Thursday 29th October. This was useful to review the responses from the Open Space survey, and also to prepare a response to NFDC on locations of playing surfaces, which we will discuss later.*

*From the meeting, there is plenty the Town Council can do to improve the facilities for residents and we can work on those. There are requests for improved walking routes and cycle ways, and more facilities at the open spaces.*

*However, many of the responses relate to items we can't change by ourselves. 74% of residents rate the roads as poor or very poor with many of the main roads through the town specifically mentioned. There was criticism of obstructions around street lights and the poor state of footpaths. Residents stated they felt Fordingbridge is neglected by HCC and NFDC in terms of funding and action.*

*In the next part of the meeting, I hope we can ask our NFDC Councillors to give their thoughts on this. Why do our residents feel that our roads and pavements are in worse condition than those in other towns?*

## **7. To receive a report from the County Councillor**

No report received.

## **8. To receive a report from the District Councillors**

Cllr Sevier reported that the draft waste and recycling strategy was approved at today's NFDC cabinet meeting and would be going out for public consultation on 12<sup>th</sup> November.

Cllr Sevier said in response to Cllr Hale's report, that NFDC has invested a lot of money in the refurbishment of the car park and in the toilet facilities there. NFDC pays for an excellent litter picker (street operative) and as a result, Fordingbridge has one of the cleanest streets possible. Cllr Sevier pointed out that roads and footpaths are the responsibility of HCC. She said if there is anything else Fordingbridge Town Council want Cllrs Sevier and Bellow to take an interest in then they would need to discuss it and see if the funding is available.

Cllr Wilson responded that the main concern for people in the town are the footways around the town. She said pavements are damaged from heavy lorries mounting them and from general neglect.

**Action: Cllr Wilson to send Cllrs Bellows and Sevier the comments from the survey and a list of pavement defects**

**Action: Cllr Sevier to arrange a pavement inspection**

*[Cllr Perkins joined the meeting.]*

Cllr Partridge (Sandleheath Parish Council) spoke as a member of the public with permission from the Chair. He asked that NFDC introduce a temporary ban on sandwich boards in Fordingbridge High Street to help with social distancing and avoid people stepping into the road.

**Action: Cllr Sevier to arrange an assessment of the use of sandwich boards in the town**

Cllr Wilson reported that the seating owned by NFDC at Roundhill is rotten. Also that outside the Co-op, the NFDC flower planter wall has not yet been repaired and has a bad crack in it, the railings are badly in need of paint and the seats are rotten and have holes in them.

**Action: Cllr Bellows to follow this up**

Cllr Bellows reported that the NFDC are adopting a private sector housing strategy to work alongside the Council run properties. For example, by identifying empty properties and helping advise and support home owners to bring those properties back into use.

Cllr Bellows reported that NFDC's part of the Council tax is to remain as it is for 2021/22.

Cllr Perkins reported that there had been a significant amount of leaf fall lately and the pavements are becoming dangerous and slippery.

**Action: Cllr Sevier to arrange for a machine to sweep pavements**

**9. To receive the following Committee meeting minutes and any recommendations to General Council contained therein.**

- Planning Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – received Cllr Paton
- Extraordinary Amenities Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 – received Cllr Mouland
- Finance and Policy Committee – 21<sup>st</sup> October 2020 – received Cllr Adams

**10. To report on any Health & Safety issues**

Nothing to report.

**11. To receive reports from representatives on Outside Bodies and meetings attended**

Cllr Hale attended the Fordingbridge Conservation Group Management Team meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November and gave the following report.

*I asked for an update on the latest plans for Bishops Pond. There had previously been plans to dig it out completely and possibly to line it. Surveys have found lots of wildlife live on the site and have adapted to the seasonal water levels. Digging out would destroy many of these species. Current plans are for a smaller area of permanent water at one end of the site. The group have planted more native species and plants which support wildlife, including a new hedge and wildflower bank. This should increase biodiversity.*

**12. To agree a response to the NFDC regarding open spaces**

Before the meeting the Clerk circulated a draft response to members for consideration (see appendix).

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Mouland and therefore RESOLVED to submit the draft response to the NFDC regarding open spaces. All in favour.

**13. To consider the terms of reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group**

Before the meeting the Clerk circulated a draft terms of reference for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to members for consideration (see appendix).

Cllr Jackson congratulated the Clerk on writing a very good document. Cllr Hale queried whether members should be named within the terms of reference. Cllr Jackson suggested that the document is kept as it is and outside help sought as and when needed.

Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore RESOLVED to adopt the Terms of Reference of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. All in favour.

Cllr Jackson expressed his thanks to the Clerk for writing the minutes of Neighbourhood Plan meetings.

**14. To note any items of correspondence**

Nothing to report.

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

The Footpath Officer reported that footpaths have been heavily used this year and that people appreciated the new SANG at Whitsbury Road. She said that there is a need for good, safe trails with connections between the different paths. She said there is an opportunity in connection with the National Park for routes to be developed outside the park and asked if, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, other areas around Fordingbridge could be developed for walking.

Cllr Sevier recommended that Councillors look at the plans for the new Fawley Waterside development and consider something similar for Fordingbridge with new walking and cycling routes. She said that Fordingbridge has a lot of local assets.

***Action: Cllr Jackson to look at Fawley Waterside plans***

Cllr Lewendon asked the Footpath Officer about a project to re-open old routes and whether there were any old routes that could be reopened around Fordingbridge. The Footpath Officer reported that Parish and Town Councils had historically been responsible for adding paths to the definitive map; Fordingbridge had been good at adding theirs and hence there are few to reopen in this area. She said that in all of Hampshire, only six routes had been put forward for consideration.

**16. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020**

The meeting closed at 8:08p.m.

## **APPENDICES**

### **Agenda item 12. Response to NFDC regarding Formal Open Spaces**

The current plans for the strategic sites to the North and West of Fordingbridge currently provide for formal playing surfaces at the North of SS16 near Marl Lane and at the North of SS18 near Fryern Court Road. The Town Council is of the view that these locations are not best placed for formal playing surfaces due to issues regarding (i) accessibility by road (for users and emergency services), (ii) parking and (iii) facilities to change so that they can be used by formal sports teams. Consequently, the Town Council would not favour formal playing surfaces in the locations currently proposed. The Town Council would instead like to see these areas retained as open green space, perhaps with play equipment or gym equipment linked to the path along the old railway line (the T'Railway).

The current provision of formal playing surfaces is at the Recreation Ground, where there are currently two football pitches and two rugby pitches. The principal rugby pitch at the South end of the Recreation Ground is on a leased field known as the Brownsey field. The Brownsey field is currently subject to a chain of leases (to which the NFDC is party) whereby occupation of the field by the rugby club is secured until 2031. The Town Council would be interested in acquiring this field together with further land to the South of the Brownsey field to increase the overall footprint of the Recreation Ground. The Town Council has written to the owner of the land to the South of the Brownsey field regarding the Town Council potentially acquiring the land but has received no response. It may be that if the NFDC were to approach the owners of the Brownsey field and the land to the South it may be possible for these parcels of land to be purchased.

The Town Council would like investment in the facilities at the Recreation Ground (floodlighting, netting for the football pitch adjacent to the road to prevent balls being kicked into the road etc). The Town Council would also like to see investment in the football pitch adjacent to the Pavilion. This pitch is used by the main men's football team but the surface itself is of poor quality – In places there is only approximately two inches of soil coverage on top of gravel. Rather than a formal playing surface being laid on one of the Strategic Sites by a developer, perhaps they could take up the existing, inadequate surface and put down a better quality playing surface for this pitch.

The Town Council would be in favour of a walking or cycling track around the boundary of the playing fields at the Recreation Ground. At present there is a path from the road to the North of the playing fields down to and along the river. However, this path just comes to an end at the South West corner of the Recreation Ground by the slipway. A path that could be used as a circuit would be preferable.

Broadening the Town Council's vision away from the Recreation Ground, it sees benefit in the provision of paths that could be used for cross country or cycling, perhaps by developing the T'Railway and the provision of outdoor gym equipment, with either a route to exercise and use outdoor gym equipment around the town, starting and finishing at the Recreation Ground, or along footpaths (perhaps the T'Railway) and utilising the open space that the Town Council has on either side of Allenwater Drive. However, in terms of formal playing surfaces, the Town Council's focus is on the Recreation Ground.

## **APPENDICES Cont.**

### **Agenda item 13. Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose**

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will take forward the production, through to examination and referendum, of the Fordingbridge Neighbourhood Plan, ensuring that relevant consultation takes place so that the plan accurately represents the views of the residents and other stakeholders.

#### **Objective**

The objective of the Steering Group is to produce a sound Neighbourhood Plan for Fordingbridge that defines the planning policy priorities identified by the community taking into account all representations made during the plan-making process. The Plan include or be supported by an appropriate delivery plan setting out, where relevant, the means by which these policy priorities will be implemented.

The Steering Group will:

- Determine the overall scope and objectives of the Plan
- Manage the process of preparing the Plan and prepare and monitor a project plan and report to the Planning committee to ensure effective progress
- Build and maintain links with the Local Planning Authority
- Keep under review the legislative requirements around Neighbourhood Planning to ensure the Plan meets all requirements
- Make recommendations to the Planning committee on involving the wider community in the Plan
- Manage the gathering of evidence necessary to inform each of the issues within the scope of the Plan
- Identify and assess options available in respect of each issue and prepare a draft Plan for wider consideration
- Produce minutes, reports and documents relating to the plan
- Identify priorities and timescales for local action
- Identify sources of funding

Subjects to be considered in the context of formulating the Plan will include but not be limited to:

- Trailway and other paths and cycleways
- Items from the Town Design statement

- Road planning (including Normandy Way/Parsonage Park)
- Parking
- Looking at potential business sites

### **Membership**

The Steering Group has the following membership and will be chaired by the elected chair of the Steering Group:

Michael Jackson (Chair)

Diane Paton (Vice Chair)

Edward Hale

Paul Anstey

Derek Hair (co-opted)

Neil Hasted (co-opted)

Paul Goddard - Town Clerk (Non-voting)

Steering Group membership will be reviewed from time to time and additional members can be co-opted as required. The Steering Group will be established for a time limited period and will run until a plan has been presented for examination and referendum.

### **Meetings**

Steering Group meetings will take place monthly or at the Chair's discretion. Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote. A minimum of four voting members of the Steering Group shall be present where matters are presented for decisions to be taken. A simple majority will be required to support any motion. The Chair (or in their absence the Vice Chair) shall have one casting vote.

### **Decision Making**

Fordingbridge Town Council is the qualifying body for the purposes of preparing the Plan. The Steering Group has full delegated authority to manage the process of preparing the Plan as set out in the objectives and within agreed budgets. Regular reports will be made to the Planning committee to ensure effective progress. Fordingbridge Town Council will approve the final draft Neighbourhood Plan prior to submission to the Local Planning Authority.