

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 2nd December 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, Goldsmith, Jackson, Lewendon, Moulard, Paton, Perkins, White and Wilson

In Attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Heron (HCC)
Cllrs Sevier and Bellows (NFDC)
2 members of the public
A reporter from the Salisbury Journal

1. To receive any apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 4th November 2020 and to report on any matters arising

Cllr Moulard proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Wilson and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 4th November 2020 are signed as a true record.

Matters Arising

Agenda item 8 – Cllr Sevier reported that Cllr Heron has taken responsibility for the pavement inspection.

Agenda item 15 – Cllr Jackson said that he hadn't looked at the Fawley Waterside plans but would report on the Neighbourhood Plan later in the meeting.

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

A member of the public reported that she had recently moved to the centre of Fordingbridge. Her property has no provision for parking and she finds the maximum limit of 20 hours in the car park impractical, especially as the pandemic necessitates working from home. She asked if resident permits could be introduced giving indefinite parking in the car park.

She also reported that the car park is not utilised efficiently as the long stay spaces are constantly full but there are lots of short stay spaces available. She reported that she received a parking ticket for parking in a short stay space with a long stay clock and asked if the zones could be rethought.

Cllr Heron responded that NFDC prioritises short stay spaces in the town centre car parks as these spaces are primarily to facilitate those coming to town for shopping or other short term uses. Long stay spaces are for the use of town centre employees primarily. NFDC is currently undertaking a review of their car parks which is close to conclusion. Cllr Heron reported that the 20 hour limit is to stop long term parking. He said that this would have been known when purchasing or renting a town centre property, which would have been cheaper because of the lack of parking. He did however concede that circumstances are different now due to Covid and people are home for longer periods than usual.

Cllr Earth reported that long stay spaces are often taken by short stay users as many of these are located close to the town centre.

The Asst Clerk reported that businesses are struggling with a shortage of long stay parking spaces for their staff and are having to take time out of their working days to move cars. She said that poor lighting is one of the factors discouraging people from parking in the slip road car park and walking into town.

Cllr Heron appreciated that businesses may be struggling for spaces for their staff but that caution was needed. If there are insufficient short stay spaces businesses will be struggling for customers as well. NFDC would rather employees were in the slip road car park and shoppers in the town centre car park.

Action: Cllr Heron to look into the parking in Fordingbridge car parks

[Cllr Perkins joined the meeting during this item.]

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

No report received. Concern was raised over the lack of police reporting and attendance at General Council meetings.

Action: Clerk to request police attendance at the next General Council meeting.

6. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor gave the following report.

I attended Remembrance Services at the Memorial Gates on 8th November, and at Stuckton Road on 11th November. My thanks to Canon Gary Philbrick for arranging these as socially distanced events, and for sharing the services through the Avon Valley Churches website and facebook.

It is disappointing not to have had an evening event for the Christmas Lights switch on this year. However, really good that the lights were switched on by Paul and Jo Williams from The Branch and the town is looking impressive again. I am pleased that many of our shops are adapting to the difficult conditions by opening longer and offering delivery services. The message is still there for everyone to shop in our town whenever we can.

As we are not having a Town Council Christmas meal this year, this is my only chance to say what I would want to say after the meal. I want to thank Paul, Rachel, Martine and all the Town Council staff for their work during 2020. It has been a challenging year but I know that myself and

the Councillors really appreciate the work that you all carry out. Without your work very little would actually get done, and we don't always make things easy for you. Thank you and here's looking forward to more great work in 2021.

The Town Clerk thanked the Mayor for his kind words on behalf of all the staff.

7. To receive a report from the County Councillor

Cllr Heron reported that he has been speaking with with County Officers about the state of the footways and highways in Fordingbridge – not just the defects which would normally be picked up but also those which the highways department would consider are wearing adequately but look appalling in a town centre location. Cllr Heron requested that highways defects, especially if off the main thoroughfare, be emailed to him with a picture and location so he could follow them up.

Cllr Heron reported that HCC still has a £210M deficit which needs to be dealt with by 2022/23.

Cllr Heron reported that a paper has been published for Dorset Council proposing in excess of 3000 new homes for Alderholt. He said that this will have significant transport implications for Fordingbridge. He reported that when the District Council did their transport assessments for their local plan, the consultants were also asked to model the impact of additional development in Alderholt and this highlighted a number of problems which wouldn't have occurred with development only being in Fordingbridge. HCC will be responding to any transport consultations with Dorset Council, pointing out that contributions from developments will need to be sought to implement any necessary work.

Cllr Wilson reported that the pavements into town from the new developments are in a poor state and discourage people from walking. Cllr Heron responded that footways should be safe and inviting and that part of the allocations for the developments talk about works which need to be done to upgrade the walking and cycling routes. Cllr Heron reported on the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). LCWIPs enable the Local Highway Authority, Local Planning Authority and stakeholders to work together to identify walking and cycling networks, rather than isolated schemes, and prioritise delivery of future improvements in an evidence based and collaborative way. HCC is starting work to identify key routes in the area, such as Godshill to Fordingbridge to Sandleheath. LCWIP would be delivered through neighbourhood plans.

Action: Cllr Heron to arrange a briefing for Town Councillors in the New Year.

Cllr Bellows asked if the LCWIP would join up with Dorset. Cllr Heron confirmed it is very important to do so.

[A member of the public left the meeting.]

8. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Sevier reported that NFDC has a deficit of £2M which she considers manageable.

Cllr Heron reported that the Local Resilience Forum have been asked by the Government to consider new Covid testing sites. It is likely that the A338 slip road car park in Fordingbridge will be used as a local testing site for six days a month only.

Cllr Wilson asked if Fordingbridge Greener Living could plant some trees (whips) at Sweatford Water Meadows now that the new path works have been completed. Cllr Sevier responded that she wasn't sure what the terms of the Section 106 agreement are and whether this land needs to be kept as open space but would look into it.

Cllr Wilson reported that the NFDC land at Parsonage Park is an important walking route to town but doesn't look inviting as it is full of brambles and you can't see the river. Cllr Hale said that this land used to be looked after by Fordingbridge Conservation Volunteers but as the group lost members they weren't able to continue this work.

Cllr Wilson reported that the post and wire fence to the rear of the water meadows has been trampled down some years ago and this serves as a getaway route for some. Cllr Sevier will investigate repairing the fence.

Action: Cllr Wilson to email Cllr Sevier the above issues so they can be followed up.

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

- Extra Ordinary Finance & Policy Committee – 4th November 2020 – received Cllr Adams
- Extra Ordinary Finance & Policy Committee – 11th November 2020 – received Cllr Adams
- Planning Committee – 11th November 2020 – received Cllr Paton
- Amenities Committee – 18th November 2020 – received Cllr Moulard
- General Purposes Committee – 18th November 2020 – received Cllr Wilson
- Finance & Policy Committee – 25th November 2020 – received Cllr Adams

10. To agree a response to the NFDC draft waste strategy

The Asst Clerk reported that the closing date for comments is the 10th Dec and that she had received one comment from Councillors so far. The Chair asked Councillors to email their comments to the office within the next few days.

11. To agree the dates of the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2021

Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Wilson and therefore **RESOLVED**: to accept the proposed dates of the ordinary meetings of the Council in 2021.

12. To report on any Health & Safety issues

Nothing to report.

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

Cllr Jackson and the Clerk attended a meeting with the Turks football club committee. Cllr Jackson reported that the Turks have 15 teams (2 Adult teams and the remainder Juniors). The Junior teams use pitches at Burgate School and will need more pitches as new housing developments are built.

Cllr Jackson reported that the Chair of Governors at Burgate School has arranged a meeting between FTC, NFDC and Burgate School to discuss the implications of elements at Burgate School. Cllr Jackson recommended that as the majority of new houses will be in the north west of the town, so should as many new facilities as possible. This will minimise the traffic impact on the town as residents will not need to travel to the Recreation Ground for sports.

Cllr Jackson reported that he has been liaising with the Alderholt Neighbourhood Plan committee. He recommended changing the Terms of Reference of the Neighbourhood Plan committee to include liaising with Alderholt Parish council as well as New Forest District Council.

Cllr Earth attended a meeting of the Avon Valley Shed on Monday evening and reported that the group now has a bank account. Avon Valley Shed are concerned there has been no progression on the lease of the old toilet block and would like to discuss the lease with FTC. The Clerk confirmed that FTC has agreed to a lease on the old toilet block building, that FTC has agreed to support the Avon Valley Shed and that FTC has agreed to provide some funding to the Avon Valley Shed to support them, with the amount still to be agreed. The Clerk confirmed that no formal agreement has been made regarding additional land or whether the Council would be happy with another building being put on any additional land and that this would need to be discussed at an Amenities meeting. The Clerk reported that he had received an email from the Avon Valley Shed saying that the group accepts that the project regarding the toilet block would take some time. In the meantime, the Avon Valley Shed is looking for alternative buildings that they can occupy to hold meetings in the short term.

Action: Clerk to arrange an Extraordinary Amenities meeting to review the Recreation Ground as a whole

14. To note any items of correspondence

The Asst Clerk reported that New Forest District Council (NFDC) is calling for proposals of projects within the district that will enhance local biodiversity and improve water quality in the river Avon, the Solent and Southampton Water. Landowners, and other interested people and groups, are asked to put forward expressions of interest by 5 January 2021 to be considered for funding.

The Asst Clerk reported a new monthly Police partnership newsletter from the New Forest Chief Inspector.

Cllr Hale reported that a local resident has asked if there could be more lights on the main Christmas tree in the town. Cllrs thought the tree looked nice and had sufficient lights already.

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

Cllr Earth reported that dog fouling is still a terrible problem, especially from The Bartons to the top of Green Lane and right through to the allotments, even around the dog bins. Cllr Wilson has been putting up posters but these have been torn down repeatedly.

Action: Clerk to email NFDC dog warden

16. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 6th January 2021

The meeting closed at 8:39p.m.