

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Purposes Committee meeting held on Wednesday 18th November 2020 at 7:50pm

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 Wilson – Chair
Cllrs Adams, Earth, Goldsmith, Hale, Jackson & Lewendon
- In Attendance:** Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs M Coatham, RFO
Cllrs Anstey, Moulard, Paton, Perkins & White (Public Gallery)
Cllr Bellows (NFDC)
A representative from the Salisbury Journal
A representative from the Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society

1. To receive any apologies for absence

No apologies were received.

2. To receive any declarations of interest

No declarations were made.

3. To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th September 2020 and report on any matters arising.

Cllr Earth proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Lewendon and therefore **RESOLVED**: to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 16th September 2020 as a true record. All in favour.

Matters arising

Agenda item 4 – The Clerk had spoken to the representative from the Salisbury Journal regarding an article reminding residents to maintain hedges at their properties. Cllr Wilson suggested also posting something on Facebook. Cllr Wilson also raised the issue of trees obscuring street lighting. Individual instances need to be reported to Hampshire County Council.

Agenda item 5 – The Clerk advised that he had further conversations with a representative of the Avon Valley Shed (“AVS”). The Town Council has agreed that a lease on the toilet block building could be offered and that it would provide financial support to the AVS, the quantum to be agreed. The Council has not yet formally agreed to provide any additional land to the AVS or permission to construct a new building. The AVS realise that the existing building in itself is not large enough. If there was another building better suited that they could occupy immediately then that would be preferable to using the old toilet block. The Clerk advised that he had been in correspondence with solicitors regarding drafting a lease for the toilet block but until such time as a firm agreement has been reached as to what was being offered to the AVS there is no point progressing the drafting of a lease. Cllr Jackson suggested that the AVS should provide a longer term management plan setting out how it was envisaged the AVS would operate and suggested the Council should formulate a master plan for the Recreation Ground. Cllr Adams felt that there should be no issue giving the AVS the go ahead with their proposal as if the AVS did not raise the money or found alternative premises then the toilet block proposal would just not go ahead. Cllr Wilson felt that General Purposes was not the appropriate meeting to be discussing the proposal and that it should be considered at a separate meeting. Moreover, the proposal is not on the agenda and so a formal decision could not be made this evening in any event.

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

No matters were raised.

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

- To consider refusing the burial of Cremated Remains in a new Grave Space

Cllr Lewendon made the distinction between utilising a grave space for cremated remains purely to have a headstone and grave spaces that contained both buried and cremated remains, and with regard to the latter whether the order of burial had a bearing. Cllr Lewendon suggested that if cremated remains could be moved then if necessary following a subsequent burial then cremated remains could be moved from a cremation space to that burial space. Cllr Adams disagreed and suggested that if cremated remains were buried in a box, then the box would deteriorate in the ground and it would not be possible to move the cremated remains. He suggested that looking at extending the cemetery would be a better option, particularly considering how emotive this issue is. He added that the NFDC could provisionally purchase land adjacent to the cemetery. Cllr Wilson suggested that this option should be raised with the NFDC. Cllr Wilson suggested deferring a decision on restricting the burial of cremated remains until the possible extension had been explored further. The Clerk advised that the Council was looking at cemetery software that would assist in terms of information management and mapping, particularly if the cemetery was going to be extended. The cost has not currently been included in 2021/2022 budget but it may be that charges for the cemetery were reviewed in order to meet the potential cost of the software.

6. Matters relating to the Town Hall

The Clerk reported that Sheering Bettle were meeting heritage Advisory Limited at the Town Hall tomorrow with a view to Heritage Advisory Limited producing a heritage statement in relation to the proposed work at the Town Hall. Cllr Adams expressed reservations regarding the proposed work and felt reducing the capacity of the main hall was retrograde step, particularly considering the increase in residents with the new developments. Cllr Wilson felt that the increase in residents may also give rise to an increase in Town Council staff and that making the hall a registry office should also be considered.

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

Noting to report.

8. To report any matters concerning footpaths

- Jobs for Lengthsman – 11th December 2020

The representative from the Ringwood & Fordingbridge Footpath Society (“RFFS”) advised that the Avon Valley Path notice board had been erected at the church and looks very good. There may be an official inauguration for the board. The water meadows south of the church have had some work done but more is required. The signage there is inadequate but Hampshire County Council (“HCC”) are working on it. On the path to Bickton there are a number of small bridges that are rotting and dangerous. This also applies to the big bridge going into Bickton – These have been reported to HCC. The representative had spoken at general council about the mitigation strategy and whether there was scope for more footpaths linking amenity land. The SANG in Whitsbury Road is being very well used. The representative’s other issue was not in Fordingbridge but at Breamore (which is well frequented by Fordingbridge residents) where there is now nowhere to park, so potentially new footpaths through the proposed Burgate developments to Breamore would be useful. Edward Heron at HCC is looking into this. Cllr Jackson suggested that, in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan, he should have further discussions regarding footpaths with the representative. The representative also raised the issue of Riverside Place, where the public have a right to walk but where residents were discouraging use of the area. She referred to the siting of the Grade 2 Augustus John statue near the great bridge, which brings people in

to Fordingbridge. Cllr Wilson advised that the NFDC were looking at transferring ownership of the area to the NFDC.

9. Matters concerning Highways

Cllr Lewendon felt that some of the development proposals, particularly the proposed exit on to the A338 at Burgate was only going to exacerbate already existing highways issues. Cllr Wilson suggested that the Town Council needed to keep this under ongoing review.

10. Matters concerning Allotments

Cllr Wilson suggested that the ground staff were having issues arising from the current layout at the allotments as they were unable to turn the mower. Double gates replacing an existing pedestrian gate would address this issue and she believed the cost of the gates would be around £200. The RFO suggested that there may be planning issues but Cllrs felt it was worth looking into further. Cllr Wilson advised that the scaffolding poles to be used as plot markers had arrived and they now need to be painted.

11. To discuss budget proposals for 2021/2022 financial year and make a recommendation to the Finance & Policy committee meeting on the 25th November 2020

The RFO noted that there was no proposed budget for the cemetery software. The Clerk believed the first year costs would be just over £1,000 for the first year. Cllr Jackson suggested that this additional cost should be put in the General Purpose for the year 2021/2022. Cllr Earth proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Hale and therefore RESOLVED: to recommend the proposed General Purposes budget for 2021/2022 with the addition of £1,000 for cemetery software to the Finance & Policy Committee. All in favour.

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 20th January 2021

The meeting finished at 8.25pm.