

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Extraordinary General Council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd February 2021 at 7pm

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, Mouland, Paton, Perkins, White and Wilson

In Attendance: Mr P Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs R Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Bellows (NFDC)
Four representatives from the Avon Valley Shed
A reporter from the Salisbury Journal

1. To receive any apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Sevier (NFDC).

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest.

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

The Avon Valley Shed committee thanked the Council for considering their application and said that the Recreation Ground is a huge asset to the people of Fordingbridge, serving a wide range of needs. He reported that the Avon Valley Shed would broaden the appeal of the Recreation Ground further and he commends the project.

4. To consider the siting of an additional Men’s Shed

The Chair reported on the background to the Avon Valley Shed’s proposal as summarised in the Clerk’s report circulated before the meeting (see Appendix) and outlined five options open to members.

1. Review the resolution to in principle support the Avon Valley Shed and the subsequent agreement to draft a lease on the Old Toilet Block.
2. Grant a lease purely on the existing building.
3. Grant an option for a lease on the existing building.
4. Offer a lease on the Old Toilet Block and grant an option on the additional land to erect a second building.
5. Offer a lease on the Old Toilet Block and the adjacent land.

Cllr Adams recommended considering the positives of this project and the benefit to the community, rather than dwelling on any negatives.

Cllr Jackson reported that to support this project financially would be in breach of Fordingbridge Town Council’s financial regulations, point 14.3, and also in breach of the consultation policy. He

raised concerns about the management plan of the Avon Valley Shed, in particular where the money will come from, whether the project will be sustainable and what length of lease is proposed. He recommended addressing these issues before the Council agrees to support this project.

Cllr Hale recommended the Council decides which policy they'd like to follow and then considers the issues raised by Cllr Jackson after that. Members agreed that public consultation would be carried out as necessary.

Cllr Lewendon reported that the original paper from the AVS (page 6) said that the Old Toilet Block alone should be adequate to accommodate 120 people a week with sufficient sessions. The AVS said that the OTB space would be challenging and they want to support as many people as possible.

Cllr Anstey said that the Council fully supports the concept of Men's Sheds and the benefits they bring and that this isn't in question. He reported that in May 2020 the original proposal was for a refurbishment of the OTB only. However, the Council is now being asked for the OTB and some adjoining land with the possibility of a second building. This will be at the loss of open recreational space in the Recreation Ground.

[Cllr White and a fourth representative from the Avon Valley Shed joined the meeting]

Cllr Paton said she'd prefer to grant a lease on the old toilet block and subject to the building being refurbished, the club working well, and finding that they need more space, then to allow the second building. She did not want to see two buildings started and neither of them finished.

Cllr Paton proposed, subject to any necessary public consultation, option 4: to offer a lease on the old toilet block and to grant an option on the additional land to erect a second building, subject to conditions being met. This was seconded by Cllr Perkins.

Cllr Anstey proposed option 2 to grant a lease purely on the existing Old Toilet Block building. This was seconded by Cllr Lewendon.

Councillors voted on Cllr Anstey's proposal of option 2: to grant a lease purely on the existing Old Toilet Block building. 3 in favour, 9 against.

Councillors voted on Cllr Paton's proposal, seconded by Cllr Perkins and therefore **RESOLVED**: subject to any necessary public consultation, option 4 - to offer a lease on the old toilet block and to grant an option on the additional land to erect a second building, subject to conditions being met. 9 in favour, 3 against.

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

Nothing to report.

6. To note the date of the next General Council meeting as Wednesday 3rd February 2021, immediately following this meeting

The meeting closed at 7:34p.m.

APPENDIX

Background

A group of residents are looking to set up a community workshop in Fordingbridge as a community hub where people can share skills and knowledge and build friendships.

Having explored other opportunities representatives from the AVS formally approached the Town Council requesting that the Town Council agree in principle to enter into a lease on the Old Toilet Block (“OTB”) at the Recreation Ground with the AVS and consent to the AVS submitting a planning application on the OTB.

In May 2020 the AVS submitted a document in support of their request (included) which set out details of their vision for the AVS, the proposed plans for the OTB, sources of funding, and the estimated costs at the time of the proposed work (“£30,000, perhaps more”).

The proposal to enter into a lease was considered at General Council in June 2020 at which the Council resolved, **“that if negotiations with the sports club don’t continue for any reason [re storage at the Pavilion], then the Council would be interested in following up on the proposal from the Men’s Shed; the Men’s Shed would be supported in principle. 9 in favour, 2 abstentions”**.

At a meeting of General Council in July 2020, whilst no formal resolution was passed, the minutes record that, “The Council agreed to proceed with drafting the lease agreement for the hire of the old toilet block.”

In October 2020, the AVS made a further formal proposal (included) to the Town Council at a meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee for a staged development of the OTB and an area of land to the north of the OTB, firstly refurbishing the OTB and subsequently constructing a second building of corrugated metal of comparable dimensions with a courtyard area in between. The projected costs were as follows:

Refurbishing works on the Toilet Block	£40,080 - £50,100
Landscaping and Courtyard	£10,050 - £13,400
Additional Building	£86,480 - £94,000

The document accompanied an application for CIL for £20,000.

At the meeting of the Finance & Policy committee on 21st October 2020, the following resolution was agreed, **“to support the Men’s Shed with a CIL contribution with the details to be discussed at a later meeting. All in favour.”**

The minutes go on to say, “Councillors confirmed that no decision would be made on any additional buildings without further research and consideration”.

A representative of the Men’s Shed said that whilst he welcomed the offer of a financial contribution, without a site to use that money, it is of no particular significance. He asked when a meeting would be held to discuss this proposal.

Action: Clerk to arrange a meeting of the full Council to discuss the siting of an additional Men’s Shed”