

FORDINGBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 7th April 2021 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, Mouland, Paton, Perkins, White and Wilson

In Attendance: Mr Paul Goddard, Town Clerk
Mrs Rachel Edwards, Asst Town Clerk
Cllr Ann Bellows (NFDC)
A reporter from the Salisbury Journal
1 Member of the Public

1. To receive any apologies for absence
Apologies were received from Cllr Ann Sevier (NFDC).

2. To receive any Declarations of Interest
No declarations of interest.

3. To confirm the minutes of the General Council meeting held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021 and to report on any matters arising
Cllr Wilson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 3rd March 2021 are signed as a true record. All in favour.

Matters Arising

Agenda item 3 – Cllr Lewendon reported that no work has been done on the footpath outside the new Augustus Park development.

Agenda item 15 – The Clerk reported that Asprey inspected the boiler at the Pavilion. The boiler is working; a valve was found to be scaled up and will be replaced.

Agenda item 24 – The Clerk has contacted Dean Brunton, NFDC, for more information on the CIL spending process and is awaiting a reply.

4. To confirm the minutes of the Extraordinary General Council meeting held on Friday 5th March 2021 and to report on any matters arising
Cllr Mouland proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Paton and therefore **RESOLVED**: that the minutes of the General Council meeting held on the 5th March 2021 are signed as a true record. All in favour.

No Matters Arising

5. To receive any matters raised by members of the public
No matters raised.

6. To receive a report on any matters under Section 17 of the Crime & Disorder Act
Reports for February and March were received.

Fordingbridge Beat Report – February 2021

Total occurrences reported: 68, 24 of which were recordable as crimes

Anti-Social Behaviour (8) 3 incidents relation to persons possibly involved in drugs, 1 of youths on a quad bike and 1 of persons on a trail bike. 1 occurrence relation to a person on a mobility scooter and 2 were personal.

Violence against the Person (4) 1 incident relating to a care home, 1 of an assault on a bus driver and 2 were domestic related

Dwelling Burglary (0)

Burglary Other Than Dwelling (1) Garage and Van entered and tools taken

Business Burglary (0)

Damage (0)

Shoplifting (1) Person has entered local supermarket and taken items without paying.

Theft (1) Bin nags taken from outside a residential property without permission

Theft from motor vehicles (3) All 3 relating to vans being broken into with 2 having items stolen

Theft of vehicle (2) 1 of a van being taken from a local carpark and 1 of a 4x4 taken from a rural location.

Fordingbridge Beat Report – March 2021

Total occurrences reported: 84, 44 of which were recordable as crimes

Anti-Social Behaviour (5) 3 relating to neighbour disputes, 1 of people believed to be linked to drugs and 1 of a person revving a bike

Violence against the Person (7) 1 report of a fight between persons known to each other, 1 of an employer be assaulted by an employee, 2 relating to residents in a care home and 3 domestic related

Dwelling Burglary (1) Owner has returned home to find rear doors open, nothing seemed to have been touched and nothing taken

Burglary Other Than Dwelling (6) 3 off Outbuildings being entered and items being taken and 3 of nothing being taken

Business Burglary (0)

Damage (7) 1 of a gas meter door being broken, 1 of an abandoned caravan being damaged by youths, 1 incident of a rear windscreen being smashed while driving, 1 of a van rear window being smashed, 1 relating to a school window, 1 of a side window to a flat by persons unknown and 1 relating to a domestic incident.

Shoplifting (0)

Theft (5) Historical theft of a parcel, 1 of charity money being taken from a locked building, 1 of daffodils being taken from the roadside, 1 of a chain and lock from a rural gate and 1 theft of a petrol hedge trimmer from a garden while work was being carried out.

Theft from motor vehicles (0)

Theft of vehicle (2) 1 of a van from the road without keys and 1 of a ride on mower from a rear garden.

Cllr Mouland reported that there had been a dispute between youngsters. Knives had been used to cause damage to a car. There was also another incident where bikes and a phone were stolen from children at the Recreation Ground. Cllr Wilson asked for PCSO May's views on the broken

fences at Sweatford Water Meadows to the rear of the allotments, raising concerns that these new routes are used by youngsters in the town to escape the police.

Action: Clerk to write to PCSO May and ask for his views on broken fence

7. To receive a report from the Town Mayor

The Mayor gave the following report.

It was good to see so many people enjoying the Recreation Ground last weekend. The play equipment and kiosk seemed to be very popular when I passed.

My thanks to Yarn Community Fordingbridge for decorating the High Street railings. Their work has brought extra interest to our High Street during the last week or so.

My congratulations to the staff and volunteers at Avon Valley Primary Care Network for passing 20,000 vaccinations at the Fordingbridge Hospital site. We can be proud of the role our town has had in the vaccination roll out.

8. To receive a report from the County Councillor

No report received.

9. To receive a report from the District Councillors

Cllr Bellows had nothing to report.

Cllr Perkins reported that blocks had been lifted from the paving behind the chemist in the car park area and not put back where they should be. He wasn't sure whether this would be the responsibility of NFDC or Hampshire Highways.

Action: Cllr Bellows to investigate this vandalism

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

- Planning Committee – 10th March 2021 – received Cllr Paton
- Amenities Committee – 17th March 2021 – received Cllr Mouland
- General Purposes Committee – 17th March 2021 – received Cllr Wilson
- Extraordinary Planning Committee – 24th March 2021 – received Cllr Paton
- Finance and Policy Committee – 31st March 2021 – received Cllr Adams

11. To review the existing sub-committee structure and consider amalgamating the Amenities and General Purposes Committees

The Clerk reported that the Amenities and General Purposes committee could be combined. At present, broadly half of the Council can make decisions on Amenities matters and broadly half on General Purposes matters. Last year there were members that wished to sit on the Amenities committee but were unable to do so because of the historic structure. This means that they could not have a say in decisions made by those committees unless they were outside of budget and had to be referred to Finance & Policy (on which all members sit).

Cllr Adams had suggested in the past there was still the opportunity for General Council to refer matters back to sub committees. More recently this has not happened and even if it did (particularly given the Amenities and General Purpose committees only meet every other month) it would protract the decision making process of the Council.

If it was felt that the scope of a combined committee was too broad then it could meet every month instead of every other month. The Clerk noted though that the duration of the combined meetings does not tend to be much longer than other sub-committee meetings.

The Clerk said that having all members on a combined committee would bring it into line with the other main sub committees (Finance & Policy and Planning) on which all members sit and therefore have a say in the decisions made.

The Clerk reported that an alternative would be to allow members to choose whether they sit on one or both of the Amenities and General Purposes committee with a minimum of five members on each committee (plus the Chair and Vice Chair as ex officio members). This would allow those members that wish to be involved in the decision making of both committees to do so but equally if a member had less interest in one of the committees they would not have to sit on it.

The Clerk said that a further alternative would be for members to perhaps annually, alternate membership of the Amenities and General Purposes committee. Or, of course, to leave things as they are.

Members discussed the options and two proposals were made.

1. Cllr Lewendon proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Perkins: that the terms of reference be changed to allow a minimum of 5 named Councillors to sit on the Amenities and General Purposes committees and to keep these committees separate and distinct from one another.
2. Cllr Jackson proposed and it was seconded by Cllr Earth: to merge the Amenities and General Purposes committees into one.

Voting was as follows:

Option 2 – to merge the Amenities and General Purposes committees into one. 6 in favour, 6 against, with the casting vote being against.

Option 1 – Change the terms of reference of both the Amenities and General Purposes committees to allow a minimum of 5 Councillors to sit on the Amenities and General Purposes and to keep these committees separate and distinct from one another.
9 in favour, 3 against and therefore **RESOLVED**.

12. To consider footways in Fordingbridge

Cllr Wilson reported that many footways in the town centre need repairs and are dangerous. She has sent photographic evidence to Hampshire Highways but no action has been taken. Cllr Wilson reported that NFDC can spend their CIL funding on infrastructure projects and money needs to be spent on pavements and roads.

Cllr Jackson reported that the NFDC Chief Planning Officer's report plans to deal with these matters in conjunction with FTC and HCC. It was agreed to discuss further at the next Planning Committee meeting once the NFDC report has been circulated to all Councillors.

13. To receive an update on the Town Hall

The Clerk reported that there is nothing further to report since last weeks' Finance and Policy Committee meeting. He recommended that this item be removed from the General Council agenda and be dealt with by the Finance and Policy Committee instead.

14. To consider street signage in Fordingbridge

Cllr Wilson reported that Hampshire County Council should periodically audit street signs, with a view to identifying and removing unnecessary signage. However, there is no specific review of signage in Fordingbridge and HCC are not aware of any general concerns.

Cllr Wilson was concerned that the streets are cluttered with signage in Fordingbridge and this is detrimental to the aesthetics of the town. She recommended that Fordingbridge Town Council find the surplus signs and ask HCC to remove them. Cllr Wilson also recommended painting the railings in the town.

15. To report on any Health & Safety issues

Nothing to report.

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

Cllr Anstey attended a meeting of the Rural Market Town Group, part of the Rural Service Network, on 29th March. He reported that there was an in-depth agenda and topics included planning issues and capital losses due to covid. Cllr Anstey said he is awaiting a backlog of the weekly magazines and will report at the next meeting.

Cllr Wilson attended a Fordingbridge Greener Living meeting. Wendy Reid from Fordingbridge Greener Living will be the Guest Speaker at the Annual Town Assembly.

Cllr Paton attended a Twinning Association meeting and reported that most activities are still on hold. The group hopes to hold a boules session later in the summer, if possible, otherwise they will restart in March.

Cllr Jackson attended a Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) seminar on 19th March, organised by HCC. He reported that the LCWIP is a Government initiative to reduce car use, by encouraging cycling and walking instead. HCC will undertake a cost benefit analysis of paths based on how many people are likely to use them, with links that join housing with schools and housing with shops expected to be prioritised.

17. To note any items of correspondence

The Clerk reported that an email of complaint has been received regarding baby mallards becoming trapped in the empty paddling pool at the Recreation Ground. The groundsman checks the pool regularly for ducklings and a plank has since been laid in the pool so any ducklings can climb out. The Clerk reported that the individual who sent the email had disturbed the groundsman in his private home when the groundsman was off duty. He had become verbally aggressive.

The Asst Clerk reported that the Rotary has not asked for new nominations for Citizen of the Year this year, due to many groups still not meeting due to Covid. Rotary received several strong nominations in 2020 when Wendy Reid was chosen (nominated by Fordingbridge Town Council) and have decided to contact those who nominated the unsuccessful people and invite them to resubmit. Regarding the Citizen of the Year board, this will be updated when out of lockdown.

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

The Clerk reported that Councillors voted on their top projects to go ahead this year. The results in order of popularity were:

- 1) Adult / Senior gym equipment
- 2) More picnic benches &
- 2) Resurfacing the car park (equally popular)
- 3) Bonded gravel or tarmac paths in the Memorial Gardens

The Clerk recommended adding an agenda item to the Finance and Policy Committee meeting to formally decide to remove other projects from the CIL list. Councillors agreed to bring the above list of options to the Annual Town Assembly to find out residents' views on CIL projects.

Cllr Adams recommended that Councillors agree the requirements and specification for the car park so all contractors quote for the same work. It had been agreed to do some maintenance repair work on the car park this year and look at resurfacing it in the future.

Cllr Paton reported that more people are using the Recreation Ground now. Some of the swings have been chained up to allow social distancing to take place. However, she reported that people queuing to use swings are standing close together and recommended putting all swings down again.

Action: Clerk to check whether Government guidance allows for all swings to be used

The Clerk reported that approval has been given for up to 16 CCTV cameras at the Recreation Ground. He recommended that due to recent concerning incidents at the Rec, further CCTV cameras be put up, provided they are within budget and subject to obtaining costings and agreement from the Chair of Amenities. He reported that Year 13 students will leave school on 21st May and Year 11 on 28th May.

Cllr Moulard reported that he saw many people out picking litter last weekend on the paths around Fordingbridge and said they were doing a super job.

19. To note the date of the next meeting as the Annual Council Meeting on Wednesday 5th May 2021 at 7.30pm

The meeting closed at 8:44p.m.