

FORDBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL  
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL  
HELD ON 18TH JANUARY 2021

PRESENT: Councillor M. Blackburn (in the Chair)  
P. Allen  
S. Blackburn  
D. Cole  
L.A. Sorrell

8471. APOLOGIES

An apology for non-attendance from Councillor Kimberley was received and noted. Councillor Cole reported that he was trying to assist Councillors F.A. and F.V. Nash to join the meeting remotely but they were unable to do so and therefore submitted their apologies. The Clerk reported that neither member had a suitable personal device to access remote meetings and were trying to use borrowed hardware which was clearly proving problematic.

RESOLVED that the absence by Councillors F.A. Nash and F.V. Nash due to technological problems in accessing the meeting be approved by the Council  
*(to comply with the requirements of Local Government Act 1972 section85[1])*

8472. DECLARATIONS OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OTHER DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

There were no declarations of interest made by members relating to items on the agenda.

8473. COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no comments, questions or suggestions made by members of the public.

8474. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held 7th December 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the proceedings.

8475. CONSIDERATION OF THE PRECEPT FOR THE 2021/2022 FINANCIAL YEAR

RESOLVED that the Council require a precept of £80,810.10 for the 2021/2022 financial year

8476. REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his continuing efforts and asked him to pass on the Council's gratitude and appreciation to the staff at the Fordbridge Centre

8477. ACCOUNTS PAID, PETTY CASH PAYMENTS, MONTHLY EMPLOYEE COSTS AND BANK TRANSFERS

RESOLVED that the report listing accounts paid, petty cash payments, bank transfers and monthly employee costs as submitted be approved

8478. CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S PARISH BASIC ALLOWANCE [THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES) REGULATIONS 2003]

The Clerk submitted details of a recommended increase to the Council's Parish Basic Allowance as advised by Solihull M.B.C. He also advised that the Council was not obliged to implement the recommendation.

RESOLVED that the Council make no change to the current Parish Basic Allowance

8479. CONSIDERATION OF A DONATION TO A CHARITY NOMINATED BY THE CHAIRMAN (IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 137 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972)  
 Members were asked to consider making a donation to the Chairman's nominated charity as the Council had not been able to stage a Charity Dance due to the restrictions arising from the ongoing pandemic.
- RESOLVED that in accordance with the provisions of Section 137(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 a donation of £2,000 be made to the mental health charity MIND.
8480. THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE: FIRE RISK ASSESSMENT (SIGNIFICANT FINDINGS)  
 The Clerk submitted for members' information a copy of the significant findings of the fire risk assessment carried out on the Council's behalf by him. He advised that many of the measures were already in place particularly safety equipment, fire detection system and emergency lighting.
- RESOLVED that the significant findings of the fire risk assessment for the Fordbridge Centre be received and noted.
8481. CONSIDERATION OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICY REGARDING RESERVE FUNDS  
 The Clerk submitted a report setting out a draft policy regarding reserve funds as recommended by the Practitioner's Guide as part of the audit process.
- RESOLVED i) that the draft general reserve policy as set out in Appendix A be approved  
 ii) that the Council transfer the sum of £10,000.00 from the Building / Improvements, Repairs and Renewals Fund to the General Reserve to satisfy the terms of the Council's policy  
 iii) that the sum of 20,000.00 be transferred from the general fund to the Council's earmarked reserves  
 iv) that the Council earmark specific reserves as set out in Appendix B
8482. REPORT BY THE CLERK TO THE COUNCIL: BUDGET MONITORING TO 31.3.2020  
 The Clerk submitted a report detailing a comparison between budget allocation and actual income and expenditure for the period ended 31st March 2020. He reported that there were no significant variations other than already notified to members.
- RESOLVED that the details of the comparison between actual income and expenditure and the budget allocation for the period ended 31st March 2020 be noted and approved.
8483. CONSIDERATION OF RE-IMBURSEMENT OF THE CLERK FOR THE PURCHASE OF PAINT AND ANCILLARY DECORATING EQUIPMENT  
 The Clerk detailed the circumstances which resulted in him being unable to use the Council's debit card to purchase paint and equipment at the outset of the initial lockdown. He included details of limited stock availability and a potential two hour wait for the Council's telephone banking service.
- RESOLVED that the Council re-imburse the Clerk the sum of £36.31 in respect of a purchase made by him of paint and ancillary equipment for use at the Fordbridge Centre

8484. AMENDMENT OF THE ADDITIONAL SCHEDULE TO THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS IN RESPECT OF PAYMENTS USING THE COUNCIL'S DEBIT CARD  
The Clerk submitted a report detailing a proposed amendment to the Council's financial regulations. The amendment is designed to bring together various existing decisions regarding the use of the Council's debit card into a single simple clarified policy.  
RESOLVED that the proposed amendment to the additional schedule of the Council's financial regulations as set out in Appendix C be approved.
8485. REPORT BY THE CLERK TO THE COUNCIL: BUDGET MONITORING TO 30.6.2020 AND 30.9.2020  
The Clerk submitted a report detailing a comparison between budget allocation and actual income and expenditure for the periods ended 30th June 2020 and 30th September 2020. He reported one significant variation that the Council received no income from the hire of the Fordbridge Centre during the first quarter of the financial year due to closure arising from the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions.  
RESOLVED that the details of the comparison between actual income and expenditure and the budget allocation and the significant variation for the periods ended 30th June 2020 and 30th September 2020 be noted and approved.
8486. CONFIRMATION OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR PAYMENTS TO BE MADE BY THE COUNCIL UTILISING THE BACS METHOD  
Members were invited to consider any changes to the existing arrangements for payments to be made using the BACS method. The BACS method is currently used to make wages and salaries payments and payments to suppliers and service providers.  
RESOLVED that no changes be made to the existing agreed arrangements for payments to be made utilising the BACS method
8487. FORMAL IDENTIFICATION AND AUTHORISATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL TO APPROVE TRANSACTIONS MADE UTILISING INTERNET BANKING ARRANGEMENTS (SECTION 6.15 OF THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS)  
The Clerk advised members that the financial regulations allowed the Council to make specific arrangements for the approval of transactions utilising internet banking arrangements. This includes authorising members to approve each transaction online in conjunction with the Clerk.  
RESOLVED i) that the Clerk produce a summary sheet each month detailing all payments made using internet banking  
ii) that each summary sheet be counter-signed by two members who shall not also be cheque signatories for the Council's bank account
8488. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21  
RESOLVED that the next meeting of the Council be held as planned on Monday 8th March 2021 and any intervening committee meetings be cancelled.
8489. PAINTING AT THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE: PURCHASE OF PAINT AND EQUIPMENT  
The Clerk advised members that the staff are planning to complete painting of the upper section of the walls of the main hall and bar and he requested approval to spend a higher amount to facilitate purchasing paint and if necessary equipment.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised until 30th March 2020 to make single payments using the Council's debit card up to a maximum of £100 to purchase paint and where necessary equipment for the Fordbridge Centre

8490. CONSIDERATION OF A RESPONSE TO MATTERS RAISED DURING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no comments, questions or suggestions made by members of the public.

The meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

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APPENDIX A

**General Reserve Policy**

The Council will maintain a general reserve to support the purposes set out below. The level of the reserve will equate to approximately nine months (75%) of the Council's net revenue expenditure. The proposed level of the reserve for the 2020/2021 financial year is £60,000.00

The general reserve will support the following objectives: -

- a) Proposed current revenue expenditure can be maintained.
- b) Urgent or essential repairs, maintenance or improvements can be made without an impact on current expenditure.
- c) Minimise increases to the following year's precept ideally to no more than 2%
- d) Provide a general contingency fund

APPENDIX B

**Earmarked Reserves**

Bar/kitchen refurbishment	£50,000.00
Miscellaneous improvements to the Fordbridge Centre	<u>£30,000.00</u>
	£80,000.00

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APPENDIX C

Payments can be made by the Clerk using the Council's debit card in the following circumstances: -

1. In accordance with section 4.5 of the Council's financial regulations
2. In pursuit of a specific Council decision
3. Purchase of office equipment or other equipment for the Fordbridge Centre in accordance with the procedure detailed in part 1 (a) of the additional schedule to the Council's financial regulations
4. Purchase of refreshments and rewards for children performing at the Christmas carol concert up to the total budget amount agreed by the Council prior to the event
5. Payments for the following items up to a maximum of £100: -
  - Annual Gas heating boiler service
  - Purchase of filter cartridges for catering boiler
  - Annual data protection registration fee
  - Annual payroll software subscription
6. Purchase of the following items up to a maximum of £50: -
  - Stationery, cleaning materials, equipment and consumables
7. Payment when making online applications to Solihull M.B.C. for temporary event notices
8. Quarterly purchases of stamps up to a maximum value of £50.00

After payment is made two members of the Council to counter sign a pro-forma setting out details of the payment made and how it complies with this policy and any payments are reported to the council as made

See part 6.18