

FORDBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES  
COMMITTEE HELD ON 13TH JANUARY 2014

PRESENT: Councillor C. McLaughlin (in the Chair)  
P. Allen  
K. Dooley  
M. Hyde  
J. Kimberley  
S. McLaughlin  
F.A. Nash  
F.V. Nash  
L. Sorrell

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for non-attendance as all members of the committee were present.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Committee held 18th November 2013 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the proceedings

4. REPORT BY THE CLERK TO THE COUNCIL: INCOME FROM HIRE OF THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE

The Clerk submitted a report, for members' information, detailing income from hire of the Fordbridge Centre in the current financial year and also the two previous financial years. The detailed information is set out in Appendix A.

5. CONSIDERATION OF A REPORT BY THE CLERK TO THE COUNCIL: MONTHLY EMPLOYEE COSTS

The Clerk submitted a report, for members' information, detailing the monthly employee costs for the previous month. The detailed information is set out in Appendix B.

6. DRAFT BUDGET FOR THE 2014/2015 FINANCIAL YEAR

The Clerk re-submitted the draft expenditure budget for the 2014/15 financial year, including the amendments agreed at the previous meeting and other minor adjustments. He also advised members of the current situation regarding the Council Tax base for the forthcoming financial year and also the confirmed level of support from Solihull M.B.C. to alleviate the impact of changes to Council Tax benefit.

RESOLVED that the draft expenditure budget for the 2014/2015 financial year as amended be approved

7. CONSIDERATION OF A SPEAKER(S) TO ATTEND THE ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Members were invited to consider speakers to attend the Council's Annual Parish Meeting in May, to allow sufficient time to be made to make the necessary arrangements

RESOLVED that an invitation be sent to the Chairman of Centro to attend the Annual Parish Meeting to discuss the budget cuts being made by the organisation

8. THE COUNCIL'S POLICY IN RESPECT OF PROVIDING PAPER TOWELS TO LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Clerk reported that paper towels were only being provided to St. Anne's School where they were being used in class rooms and the staff toilets. Hand dryers were available in the pupil's toilets following development of the new school

RESOLVED that the Council withdraw the supply of paper towels to St. Anne's RC Primary School

9. CONSIDERATION OF DONATING USE OF THE CENTRE TO M.A.P.A. FOR A FUND RAISING EVENT

The Clerk reported that the Meriden (Park) Adventure Playground Association wished to stage an Easter related and a child orientated event on the afternoon of 26th April 2014. The group did not wish alcohol to be available.

RESOLVED that M.A.P.A. be allowed free use of the Fordbridge Centre from 1pm – 5pm on the above date

10. REPLACEMENT OF THE RANGE COOKER AT THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE

The Clerk reported that a further issue had arisen with the range cooker with the edges and knobs becoming dangerously hot during cooking. He suggested that further repairs (if possible) to an ageing appliance may not prove to be cost efficient and asked members to consider purchasing a replacement. He also reported that the best quotation that he had so far obtained was £899.

RESOLVED that the Clerk be authorised to purchase a replacement range cooker for use in the kitchen at the Fordbridge Centre

11. REGISTRATION WITH SOLIHULL M.B.C ALLOWING THE COUNCIL TO RUN A LOTTERY (RAFFLE) IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CHAIRMAN'S CHARITY DANCE

The Clerk reported that the Council had resolved to hold a separate "Prize Draw" with a specific prize, with the beneficiary charity acting as the promoter. The charity unfortunately do not provide this service and if the Council wished to proceed it would need to register with Solihull M.B.C. as a promoter in its own right. The initial cost of registration is £40.00 and that registration can be maintained each year at a cost of £20.00 per annum. The cost of registration would need to be allocated to the Chairman's Charity Fund.

RESOLVED that the Council obtain a licence from Solihull M.B.C. as a promoter of a local lottery at the cost of £40.00

12. REPLACEMENT OF THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

The Clerk advised members that the company which designed and provided the Council with support for updates had ceased trading and the content of the Council's website had now disappeared completely and he could no longer access the site. He supplied quotations for developing a replacement website and recommended that the Council use a designer who has worked with other local councils who will be responsible for maintaining and updating the website (at an additional cost). This arrangement will reduce the risk of the Council ending up without a functioning website.

RESOLVED that the Council accept the quotation in the sum of £575.00 from 2GeeDesign to develop a new website

13. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Clerk advised members that they must carry out an annual review of the Council's system of internal control and its effectiveness. The review ensures that the Council can give the relevant assurance as part of the governance section of the Annual Return at the end of the financial year.

He reported that he had been approached by Diane Malley who is a qualified auditor and has experience as a Clerk who offers payroll and internal audit services on a freelance basis. The quotation for performing the internal audit would be £325.00 which is half of the current cost. He confirmed that she is independent of the Council and as outlined above is competent to perform the role.

He outlined the five key area that members needed to consider as part of the review and outlined the measures that are in place to satisfy those five key indicators.

- RESOLVED
- i) that Diane Malley be engaged as the Council's internal auditor for the next twelve months
  - ii) that members of the Council have reviewed its system of internal control and is satisfied of the independence and competence of its internal auditor and that an annual audit plan is in place and relevant terms of reference have been notified.

14. CONSIDERATION OF THE WORKING PARTY'S RECOMMENDATIONS IN RESPECT OF A PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR USE IN CO-OPTION TO FILL CASUAL VACANCIES AND ALSO THE PROCEDURE FOR FILLING CASUAL VACANCIES.

The Clerk reported that the working party established by the committee had met and considered the model person specification for use in co-option and he submitted the amended version which the working party recommended be used by the Council. The working party also recommended a revised procedure for co-option to fill casual vacancies.

- RESOLVED
- i) that the revised person specification as submitted be adopted by the Council
  - ii) that the revised procedure for filling casual vacancies as set out in Appendix C be approved

15. REVIEW OF HIRE CHARGES AT THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE

The Clerk submitted details of the existing hire charges and a report outlining recommendations based on the current situation. A debate took place on the question of hire by commercial users.

- RESOLVED
- i) that the charges for using the meeting rooms be reduced to the same amount as the two day time sessions
  - ii) that the charges for the main hall from Monday to Thursday be reduced to the same amount as the afternoon session
  - iii) that the transitional rate for Slimming World on Thursday evening be removed
  - iv) that the total charge for use by other commercial users be increased by £5.00

16. CLOSURE OF THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE: NEW YEAR'S EVE

The Clerk submitted a report outlining a procedure to allow the Council to let the Fordbridge Centre on a New Year's Eve. He added the proviso that Leisure Bars wished to discuss the issue before proceeding due to possible concerns regarding their overheads.

- RESOLVED that consideration of this matter be deferred to the next meeting of the Committee

17. W.A.L.C. TRAINING EVENTS

The Clerk submitted details of W.A.L.C. training events concerning “Governance and Accountability” and “Effective Responses To Planning Applications”. The cost of each event being £35.00 per delegate.

RESOLVED that the Council send one delegate to each event should any member be interested

18. SEPARATE NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENTS FOR TOWER BLOCKS

A debate took place regarding separate arrangements for distributing the Council’s newsletter within tower blocks and other multi occupation buildings and the associated difficulties.

RESOLVED that consideration of this matter be deferred and the general questions of production and distribution of the newsletter be discussed at the next meeting of the committee

The meeting closed at 9.10 p.m.

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CHAIRMAN

## FORDBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL

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#### APPENDIX A

##### Income from hire of the Fordbridge Centre

	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
	£	£	£
April	3,039.00	2,066.00	2,361.00
May	2,573.00	2,518.00	1,738.00
June	1,528.00	1,660.00	2,039.00
July	2,565.00	2,021.00	1,905.00
August	1,343.00	1,786.00	1,616.00
September	1,458.00	2,031.00	1,383.00
October	1,881.00	2,170.00	1,725.00
November	<u>1,753.00</u>	<u>2,326.00</u>	<u>2,363.00</u>
	<i>16,140.00</i>	<i>16,578.00</i>	<i>15,130.00</i>
December	1,221.00	1,771.00	
January	2,956.00	1,543.00	
February	2,078.00	1,798.00	
March	<u>2,238.00</u>	<u>2,360.00</u>	
	24,635.00	24,050.00	

#### APPENDIX B

##### Monthly Employee Costs

November 2013:	
Salaries & Wages	£4,218.28
Employer's NI	£175.26
Employer's Pension Contributions	£538.56

#### APPENDIX C

- a) Applications should be made in the first instance in writing to the Clerk to the Council.
- b) Each applicant will be required to confirm that they meet the criteria for eligibility and are not disqualified.
- c) Details of all applications will be reported to the Council.
- d) Applicants will be interviewed by a Sub-Committee of five members in due course.
- e) The interview meeting will then decide whether or not to recommend an applicant for co-option.
- f) Co-option will take place at the next Council meeting in accordance with statutory procedure.