

FORDBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
HELD ON 25TH APRIL 2016

PRESENT: Councillor S. McLaughlin (in the Chair)
P. Allen
H. Bennett-Watson
J. Kimberley
C. McLaughlin.
A. Nash
L. Sorrell

7965. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Councillors Dooley and F.V. Nash.

7966. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST FROM MEMBERS AND OTHER
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA.

Councillor Allen declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in item number 12 regarding payment of travel expenses when opening/securing the Fordbridge Centre

7967. COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR SUGGESTIONS MADE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

7968. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meetings held
7th March 2016, 23rd March 2016 and
11th April 2016 be approved and
signed by the Chairman as a correct
record of the proceedings.

7969. CONSIDERATION OF FILLING FIVE CASUAL VACANCIES BY CO-OPTION:
BENNETT'S WELL WARD, COLE WARD AND HATCHFORD WARD (3)

RESOLVED that consideration of these vacancies
be deferred to the next meeting of the
Council

7970. REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

A written report from the Chairman was presented to the meeting in which she thanked those Councillors who had assisted with preparations for the Charity Dance on the Friday evening. She reported that the entertainment at the event was very good with everybody dancing all night. The food was good and appreciated by those attending the evening. A letter from Mr Trevor Eames of the Solihull Ratepayers Association was also presented to the meeting offering his appreciation of the evening and congratulating the Chairman on its success and her work.

(Councillor Kimberley asked for it to be recorded in the Minutes that he voted against the inclusion in the Minutes of the details of the letter from Mr. Eames)

7971. STAFFING COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Staffing Committee held 14th March 2016 were presented to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be received and the
recommendations contained therein be
approved.

7972. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Health and Recreation Committee held 11th April 2016 were presented to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be received and the
recommendations contained therein be
approved.

7973. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held 11th April 2016 were presented to the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Minutes be received and the recommendations contained therein be approved

7974. 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

7975. REPRESENTATIVES' REPORTS

There were no representatives' reports presented to the meeting by any member of the Council

7976. MILEAGE/TRAVEL EXPENSES FOR MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHEN OPENING/ SECURING THE FORDBRIDGE CENTRE IN THE ABSENCE OF A CARETAKER

The Clerk reported that after studying the relevant guidance, his view was that this situation could be considered as additional and unforeseen and therefore outside of the scope of Parish Basic Allowance. He had sought advice from WALC who concurred with this view describing the payment of expenses in this instance as a legitimate expense in providing a service for the Council. The Clerk recommended that the Council pay expenses for travelling to open and secure the Fordbridge Centre in the absence of a caretaker.

RESOLVED that the Council pay expenses to Councillor Allen for mileage undertaken when opening/securing the Fordbridge Centre in the absence of a caretaker at a rate of 45p per mile

(Councillor Allen declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in this matter and did not participate in the debate or voting on this matter)

7977. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S SYSTEM OF INTERNAL CONTROL

The Clerk submitted a document recommending procedures for the Council to adopt to maintain the effectiveness of its system of internal control and also identifying issues for members to consider in due course. He advised that many of the recommendations confirmed existing practice to demonstrate transparency for members of the public, or sought to ensure that the Council's procedures for payments by bank transfer, direct debit and debit card were as rigorous as possible following changes to legislation in respect of cheque payments.

RESOLVED that the Clerk's recommendations as set out in Appendix A be approved

7978. APPROVAL OF THE CLERK'S ACTION IN RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE PROCEDURE FOR MAKING APPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING PERMISSION

The Clerk reported that the Government had been consulting on proposals for a new two stage process for planning applications with an initial application to establish suitability of land which would maintain existing arrangements for engaging with local communities. The second stage would focus on technical details with local authorities not compelled to engage with the local community. Time constraints had prevented the matter being discussed formally at a meeting but the Clerk had made an objection on behalf of the Council stressing the need for full consultation with the local community at all stages of the process.

RESOLVED i) that the Council approve and endorse the Clerk's action in responding to the issue identified in the Government consultation
ii) that the Clerk write to NALC/WALC complaining about the delay in the information regarding the consultation being provided to Councils

7979. 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

FORDBRIDGE TOWN COUNCIL
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APPENDIX A

Review of the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control

I have considered the effectiveness of the Council's system of internal control and recommend that the Council adopts the following specific policies and procedures:-

- Schedule of payments that are to be made by BACS transfer etc at the beginning of each month to be approved prior to the end of the previous month
- Information detailing payments made by petty cash to be provided to members each month
- Counter signatures by two members to be made following payment by debit card
- The Council's debit card to be used in pursuit of specific Council decisions as much as possible
- Circumstances in which debit card to be used to be approved in advance
- Emergency use of debit card to be specifically reported to the Council
- Council decisions regarding events (e.g. Charity Dance, carol concert etc) to include details of how payments are to be made
- All cash collected is to be stored securely within the Fordbridge Centre using the safe. Cash to be deposited at the bank at no more than four weekly intervals, or if the cash held on the safe exceeds £1,500 or the amount specified by the Council's insurance policy
- All payments to suppliers etc to be paid at the beginning of the month following receipt of invoice
- Bank reconciliation to be provided for members at each meeting of the Council

I also recommend that the Council review or consider the following issues in due course:-

- The policy for use of the Council's debit card to be reviewed
- Policy for payments to be made by petty cash to be introduced (including maximum single payment)
- Review Clerk's delegated financial responsibility, associated maximum spending limits, reports of expenditure made and Council policy in regard of each area of responsibility