

## MINUTES OF FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE PARISH COUNCIL

This meeting was held on at 6:45 on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023  
at The Church Rooms, Deerleap Lane, Colbury

In Attendance: Cllr Caroline Hubbard (Chair), Cllr, Trevor Jakeman, Cllr Keith Nutburn, Cllr Sue Robinson, Cllr Caroline Smith, Cllr Esther Sutherland, Cllr Bobbie Torkington, Cllr Clive White (Vice Chair), Cllr Joe Reilly (NFDC), Katie Walding (Locum Clerk), 8 Members of the Public

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**48 Apologies – Cllr Keith Mans (HCC)**

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**49 Declarations of Interest - None**

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**50 Public Participation –**  
Ian was handing over the Allotments Committee to Tony; Karen would arrange a meeting with him. Cllr Hubbard gave thanks from the entire PC for all work he had put in since the inception of the allotments, both with allotment holders and PC members.

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**51 To Receive Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023**  
**RESOLVED:** Minutes of the Full Council Meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 were received and signed by the Chair, proposed by Cllr Robinson and Seconded by Cllr White.

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**52 Matters Arising At Chair's discretion (if not covered by agenda below)**

**Sensory Garden –** There had still been no response from Go Botanical regarding the sensory garden plants.

**Planters –** It had been agreed following the September meeting, to increase the amount from £50 to £75 for bulbs; subsequently these had been purchased and tulips would be planted in the next two weeks.

**Watering Rota for Summer 2024 –** The rota for watering next summer is already in place, thanks to community volunteers.

**NFNP Planning Committee 26<sup>th</sup> September 2023 –** The Ashurst Hospital site application was approved by the NFNP; members would watch to see developments on the nursing/care home.

**Removal of Slide –** Clive Dibden Agriculture had been unable to do this yet, due to the ground conditions and it may well slip to late December or January.

**Other items would be covered elsewhere in the agenda.**

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Signed:

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**53 Reports****a. District and County Councillors**

**Joe Reilly – NFDC** – Gave a reminder that 24<sup>th</sup> November is the cut off for applications to the green waste scheme to obtain the discount offer; there had been an excellent uptake from residents already (approx 10,000 subscriptions so far).

The District Council is making available £1m for 'Community Infrastructure Levy' (CIL) funds to be spent on local projects. These projects will help infrastructure to be delivered on projects local communities have highlighted. Cllr Reilly urged the Council to look at whether they might apply. The window for making a bid is open from now until mid December, and further information is available on the website at: <https://newforest.gov.uk/article/3423/CIL-bids-and-expenditure>

CIL can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure projects from large-scale transport and highways improvements to play areas and community buildings. Further information is available at: <https://newforest.gov.uk/cilspend>. Netley Marsh received £125K funding towards a new road crossing.

**b. Committee Chairs/Working Parties**

Cllr Jakeman: plot inspection was carried out and some vacant plots noted and others which need attention. Plot 16A now has a weed membrane applied – still has a couple of planters in the middle which need attention. Letters need to go out to tenants. Three plots are in a terrible state and risking harbourage for rats, plus they have an unfair, negative impact on neighbouring plots. Several are covered in mares tail. Numbers need replacing on some plots. Birds are getting caught in netting; need to remind plot holders to secure at the base. Mention to Tony Barron to speak to plot holders. One new plot holder has barely started and hasn't paid for the key but is working to make improvements. Signage is in hand and arrangements will be made with Alf to put them up. Allotment waste is being dumped near the clippings, so some signs have been put up. Chippings from yew are poisonous and it is really important they are removed safely from the entire site. The other issue is a broken drain cover and Alf will be contacted to repair.

**c. Parish Councillors**

Cllr Jakeman attended the most recent quadrant meeting. The FE representative noted that the costs for maintaining forest car parks are significantly increasing. More may have to be closed this winter as a result. Following the launch of the PSPO in July, 152 incidents had been reported – primarily issues with livestock petting. Operation Mountie responded to a question about the source of most problem drivers and confirmed that the majority are local commuters. They were keen that PCs support the campaign and the advice across their social media channels, to promote and remind of the caution needed.

Steve Avery noted that the NFNPA were expecting an application for next August coming for works on the A326 dual carriageway.

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**d. Neighbourhood Watch – Mandy Evans**

NW provided warning signage to members for their garages.

Totton had recorded recent issues with a door caller posing as a milkman with no ID or branded information. The advice to ignore had been given, the Police notified and a photo provided. 'No caller' stickers were available. There would be a Police/NW surgery at Happy Cheese with the next on 5<sup>th</sup> December. Literature would be available. It was planned to make this regular. Several members had asked for a social evening; now planned at the Happy Cheese on 22<sup>nd</sup> January from 7pm. Trevor Brooks would do a talk on cyber crime and staying safe online. The Council applauded this effort.

Street signs were tired and so new signs would be sited in at least 15 locations, once permission from HCC and SEE had been obtained.

Cllr Jakeman said that Nicky Swift, Safety Partnership, NFDC had noted that outbuildings are targeted but this doesn't necessarily mean house break-ins will increase.

The SID isn't working. Unsure who has put it up, or who to report its failing to.

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**e. Brice Stratford NFALC**

Had shared the vision statement for the future of NFALC. Invited all members to the Extraordinary Meeting on Zoom on 12<sup>th</sup> December, to talk about the proposed changes to the Constitution. Issues are low attendance and engagement. This then means the purpose is not fulfilled as NFALC is not representing a high enough proportion of member councils. When only 6 out of 37 attend it holds no depth of value. Has created a talking shop similar to quadrant or consultative panel meetings and does not add value and could be seen as a time waster. Very rarely quorate so decision making becomes hard. Some councils are wedded to named representation following pre-decisions at their own PC meetings. If new info is provided at the NFALC meeting then they have to defer. A single decision can take over half a year and as much as a year to make! A lot of councils simply don't engage because it is too cumbersome to be of use. Proposals therefore are that instead of single reps with pre-determined voting instructions, make it an assembly where individuals can attend in their own right and vote as they see fit, after joining in the discussion and debate. It was proposed to include a cap of three votes per council per meeting, only if they are in attendance. It is hoped this will encourage more people to attend and takes the pressure off individuals having to be the representative every time – members can mix and match. NFALC could act as a networking opportunity for cllrs to engage, the more who come the more valuable it will be. The stated Purpose is being redefined a little as well, to be less broad and more specific, with a clear remit to be non-partisan and to ensure inclusion for all border PCs.

Is there a risk that individuals will vote on matters other than according to their council's position? Any vote would be required to be ratified at the voting Council's next meeting, or withdrawn if it was felt appropriate and justified. A faster way to progress is to receive the votes in principle and then receive the ratification or otherwise from the members afterwards. This should therefore not conflict with SOs or pre-determination concerns.

Clerks Network – this had been raised by clerks who benefit from information sharing across the district.

NFALC would also hope to appoint representatives for specific subject areas, such as commoning. The rep would be available for any councillor to contact for advice on that specific subject, or to attend a meeting with an outside body or authority; the rep could also act as consultee and filter knowledge and requests through, but as an equal councillor. Other subjects could be events, traffic and transport, coastal, all pooling collective resources for all to benefit from.

There would be a review each 12-18 months to see how the changes impact in practice.

Members indicated that they would try to attend the Zoom meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December.

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**54 Policy****a. 1. To Agree Council Meeting dates for 2024**

**RESOLVED:** to agree all dates; and to consider the parish meeting in January, including looking at the format, and setting the date, when Karen is back.

**2. To look at increasing the precept for 2024 to 10%**

Previously the council had held a meeting focused only on the budget and precept setting. Cllr White had previously worked with Karen and produce the paperwork which had been shared. He noted several items of importance:

- the CiLCA payment will be deferred.
- Increased costs are mainly due to the bin emptying charges being imposed by NFDC of nearly £5000.
- The Council holds around £60k in reserves.
- The current precept was £45k.
- The budget for 2024 is based on expenditure as usual.
- Projected expenditure for the rest of this financial year (having spent just under £39k so far) would include payments for the storage facility, magazine, grass maintenance and salaries, totalling approx £8500. This would result in total expenditure of about £47k, obviously more than precept. Some was one off and so doesn't need to be included again.
- In the current year, unexpected costs included drainage, defib, and signage and the overspend would mean the cashflow would be reimbursed from reserves.
- In the next financial year there would be more drainage, purchase of a flagpole, and increased grounds maintenance.
- Given the shortfall this year, then at least 10% would be needed to cover next year. Reserves could help if needed.
- Karen's recommendation was clearly borne out by reviewing the figures.
- There is no cap on the amount of increase possible, unlike District and County.

**RESOLVED:** Proposed by Cllr Sutherland and seconded by Cllr Torkington, it was agreed to increase the Precept for 2024-25 by 10%.

Cllr Sutherland thanked Cllr White for all the work done. It was a huge effort to work it all up. Karen was pleased to report that using the Scribe accounts package is helping a lot and a full year of data will really make it better again next year. Karen isn't going to use the allotments package.

*[Cllr Reilly left]*

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**55 Community & Environment****a. To Review and Accept the new Grounds Maintenance Quote**

**RESOLVED:** Approved the increase to Grounds Maintenance work to £3550 per annum, reflecting the increase in the number of visits, increased cuts and more allotment works.

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**b. Christmas Event**

Cllr Nutburn noted the need for another meeting of the working party. However plans were progressing: the event would be at the Forest Inn, on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December from 6pm. Ocean Harmony were happy to attend (should include food and/or donation for them) agree the agenda and put up posters. Christmas lights were up at the venue and the inside looks great as well.

The magazine would publish the date, time, venue and encourage all residents to attend and to watch Facebook and noticeboards for more information. Currently working on a Father Christmas – maybe a grotto? A keyboard player for music inside? Could use the garage area outside with a PA system. Cllr Hubbard would adjust her chair's report to include an update.

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**c. Recreation Ground****1) To Review & Agree purchase of Flag & Flagpole Quote for £1211.98**

**RESOLVED:** to purchase a temporary flag pole for up to £250, noting this was preferred as it could be removed and stored when not in use, and was significantly less expensive. It was hoped a grant could be sought to help cover the cost but would be a worthy addition to the village.

Could also perhaps look at improvements to the area around the soldier, noting that the proposed sensory garden would be in that area too.

**2) To Consider A Frost Design Quote for £198.00 for Stepping Stones repair**

**RESOLVED:** To approve the quote for £198 subject to clarification that it means 1 call out and not 1 stepping stone.

**3) To Accept and Review Recent Playground Inspection Report from Elite Playground Inspections**

It was noted that the same issues were raised during the annual inspection, some remedial works still need to be done. Follow up with Open Spaces.

**4) To Discuss and Agree Recommendations and Quote from Drain Rescue for £7800**

**DEFERRED:** Cllr Jakeman explained that following the success of the works already done, then some patch repair is an option. In light of the proposed costs, and given the drain is running, this is future proofing work that is not urgent. Cllr Jakeman recommended that Council consider deferring it and maybe try to use S106 funds and do the work in the future. This drain does not contribute to any local flooding. A grant application could be part of the recreation ground wider application.

**5) Update from Working Party re New Play Equipment Quotes**

Had to reschedule the meeting, therefore nothing to report til January.

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**d. Christmas Trees & Lights in Precinct**

**DEFERRED:** Cllr Nutburn had received quotes to do lights; for two people, for one day to put up and another day take down in January, the quotes were approx £1600. An electrician came and reviewed the power box. Needs more research. Recommendation is to defer this year and get quotes for getting it done next year and fundraise at the fete etc to pay towards it. Now know to get in touch with SSE as eligible for a key from the power provider. Box is now secure. There is currently no power to the noticeboard as the cable is gone (it went many years ago), but there is power to the sensor. Karen had confirmed that a permit is also needed to put up Christmas lights and this would have to be applied for in April time. The council would progress this plan early in the new year. Thanks to all for the work done so far; definitely worth pursuing and understanding the costs but the right decision to defer this year.

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- e. **To Agree Quote for £140.00 to replace the bottom of Co-op Noticeboard**  
**RESOLVED:** to agree the quote for £140.
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**56 Finance**

- a. **To Approve Online Payment Schedule dated 21<sup>st</sup> November 2023 (if required)**  
APPROVED
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- b. **To Ratify Approval of Online Payment Schedules dated 27th September 3<sup>rd</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup> October & 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023**  
APPROVED
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- c. **To Receive Income & Expenditure Reports from 19<sup>th</sup> September 2023 onwards**  
APPROVED
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- d. **To Agree Additional Expenditure of £50 per month for 4 pages in the Magazine**  
There was no need to pay it now, a new printer is including the extra pages for the same price. This printer also offered a very quick turn around which is a bonus.
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- e. **To discuss letter from NFDC Regarding Bin Collections – increase from £0 per annum to £4900 plus VAT per annum to empty bins in precinct 4 times per week**  
Very limited choices as to alternatives. They are emptied four times a week but they are very well used and it is an excellent service as the bins are never over flowing. Other councils have reviewed and can't find cheaper alternatives.
- Perhaps an article in the magazine and note that people put their own refuse in the bins which fills them quicker and means more cost!
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**57 Future Meeting Dates**

- a. **Planning Committee – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 6:30pm (if required)**  
Depending on new applications being registered
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- b. **Full Council Meeting – 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 7:00pm (if required)**  
This meeting is cancelled. Next meeting will be 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2024
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**Meeting Closed at 8.10 pm**