

108. CORRESPONDENCE

- a) A suggestion that all councils meetings could start at 5.00pm for the remainder of the lockdown, referred to the Executive Committee by F&GP. Some members felt the idea had merit, while others preferred the status quo. It was decided to retain current start times, but to vary them if necessary for individual meetings as and when required.
- b) A letter dated 1 Feb from the Chairman of the New Milton Town Partnership (NMTP) announcing with much regret that the charity will be dissolved by 31 March 2021, being their year-end. Members expressed sorrow at its impending demise, and the Chairman asked the Town Clerk to write a letter of appreciation to the Chairman of NMTP.
- c) An email dated 3 Feb from Simon Nightingale of Lacey's solicitors who advised Trustees about setting up a joint charity between the War Memorial Recreation Ground charity and New Milton Memorial Centre. Members noted Lacey's intend raising a final invoice for £3,600 having previously raised one for £4,425.60 in Feb 2020. Agreed.

109. CULTURAL HUB

The Town Clerk referred to an email received from Anthony Harris, Council Solicitor, regarding Lacey's involvement, confirming that a different charity will indeed need to be created and in drafting papers to send to the Charity Commission a new name is required. It was agreed by members that New Milton Cultural & Community Centre was appropriate.

110. BOUNDARY COMMISSION

The Chairman explained geographical boundaries of wards for the New Forest district have been reviewed by Local Government Boundary Commission for England being independent organisation that looks at the electoral arrangements for councils. They do this so:

- each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters.
- ward areas reflect the interests and identities of local communities.

Wards are geographical areas that are represented by elected councillors. There are currently 34 wards and 60 councillors for the district. If the LGBCE's report is approved by Parliament, from the date of the next NFDC local elections in May 2023, there will be 26 wards and 48 councillors, being 20% less than presently.

The Chairman explained that the Town Council could follow suit and possibly reduce their number from 18 to 14, align new wards similarly, with 4 Cllrs for Ashley, Bashley & Fernhill, 2 Cllrs for Ballard, 4 Cllrs for Barton & Becton, and 4 Cllrs for Milton. NFDC would have half that number per ward, so in effect there would be 7 District Cllrs for these wards. It was:

RECOMMENDED: That proposals to reduce Cllr numbers be prepared for NFDC

111. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Chairman introduced this item, and all those present contributed to the discussions.

The Referendum could be scheduled for 6th May 2021 – to coincide with elections for HCC Councillors and Hampshire Police and Crime Commissioner. This would ensure the town did not miss out on increased developer contributions for community infrastructure should the Plan be adopted. For large residential developments, this amount could be substantial. *NB: Application deadline for postal vote would be 20 April.*

It was confirmed NFDC will manage the Referendum process but with minimal promotion. To increase awareness / understanding of the benefits of the Neighbourhood Plan and to encourage voting, the TDM suggested a promotional campaign could be developed to reach all sectors of the community, via an appropriate leaflet drop to all 10,515 properties in the town, as previously occurred on two separate occasions when preparing the NP.

The TDM produced a Town Development Roadmap – based on the Government’s Adaptive Strategy approach - that was presented to a meeting of Cllrs and staff on 4 February in conjunction with a proposed Communication Strategy. The aspiration and ambition of the Neighbourhood Plan vision projects is strongly emphasised as was the need for wide-ranging expertise, skills & activities not currently covered by Town Council processes.

The Roadmap produced in conjunction with the Assistant Town Clerk, proposes that once a project is identified as a discrete and feasible project, it has a dedicated Working Group to drive delivery, submitting plans to the Planning Committee in order to facilitate and prepare for Pre-App. The governance methodology now proposed to be reviewed by the Executives when considering town development options, working closely with Planning.

The Chairman thanked everyone for contributing to the debate and summarised the need to plan for the Referendum and produce an Implementation Plan along the lines suggested. In line with other working parties, all Councillors will be invited to join such Working Groups.

112. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - To be advised

There being no further business to discuss, the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and closed the virtual meeting at 6.15 pm.

CHAIRMAN _____ DATE _____

Distribution:

Members of the Executive Committee

Town Councillors – For Information

District Councillors C V Ward, J L Cleary

County Councillors M Kendal, F Carpenter and K Mans

Press

Minute	Action Points	Action by date	To be actioned by
109	Cultural HUB proposed charity name	29 March 2021	Anthony Harris
110	Proposals to reduce Cllr numbers	29 March 2021	Town Clerk
111	Plan for the Referendum	29 March 2021	Planning
	Produce an Implementation Plan	29 March 2021	TDM / Execs