

MINUTES OF THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

2 November 2011 7.30pm
The Harlington

Councillors

George Woods (Vice Chair standing in for the Chairman), Richard Appleton, Chris Axam, Chris Butler, Grahame Chenery, Paul Einchcomb, Sue Fisher, Denis Gotel, Leslie Holt, Alan Hope, Arthur Hurley, Dai Pierce, Andrew Macallan, Sue Tilley.

Also Present

Shar Roselman – Clerk

Mr Ian Brown Director of the Basingstoke Canal Authority (for part of the meeting)

Mr Andrew Smith Head of Countryside Services HCC (for part of the meeting)

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 1: APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Schofield, Cllr Forster, Cllr Robinson and a block apology from Cllr Perthen.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 2: DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Butler declared a personal interest in Item 7.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 3: PUBLIC SESSION

There were no questions from members of the public.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 4: PRESENTATION – BASINGSTOKE CANAL

A presentation on future plans for the Basingstoke Canal was given to Council by Mr Ian Brown, Director of the Basingstoke Canal Authority. Background information to the canal was provided: the canal is 32 miles long, was first built in 1778 and had been extensively restored between 1976 -1991. There are 28 Working Locks in Surrey and 1 in Hampshire. alone. The canal holds SSSI status, attracts an estimated 1 million visitors a year, and is a sustainable urban drainage system. Recently the Canal Authority had secured high level stewardship funding of £190 000 which would be spent on aquatic issues. There was a conservation management plan in place, and a complex asset register had been completed, which gave an understanding of what needed to be done to refurbish locks etc, and showed that significant further funding was needed for replacement of capital assets. £787800 would be provided by Surrey Council and £758000 would be given by Hampshire County Council over a three year period for stage one improvements. The Authority was also currently employing consultants to propose how best to develop the canal including full navigation, was looking at Marinas and Waterside Parks as potential sources. The Authority was also looking at the possibility of affordable housing on the canal.

Cllr Appleton mentioned that the current formula for funding seemed to be most beneficial to rural parishes and that urban parishes appeared to come second to these. He also asked

about the policy of taking down trees to provide adequate light to plants in the canal, and stated that Fleet Residents might prefer to maintain the trees in place than to preserve plant life, however rare. He sought information on how many trees would be taken down in Fleet.

Cllr Axam asked how the figure quoted, "... the canal provides economic benefits of some 5 million pounds per year" was derived. He was advised that there is a set formula for determining such benefit per square meter, and that there were many users of the canal such as the Angling Association who held matches and competitions throughout the year on the canal.

Cllr Appleton commented that Natural England had long held the view that increasing navigation might destroy rare species of plants in the canal. Mr Ian Brown noted that this had been true in the past, but that the mood was changing, as it was recognised that boating was a primary function of the canal.

The council sought information on when there might be an opportunity to promote water based activities in Fleet, and what actions were planned to improve the tow path. Questions were raised about whether funding was spent where it was raised. In the case of the capital funding from the County Councils above it was confirmed that it was spent in the country from which it came. The Basingstoke Canal Authority was extremely grateful for the funding offered through Fleet Town Council which helped to fund the revenue account and was aware of the Council interest in being represented. It was noted that there was concern about ongoing capital funding to meet the needs exposed by the asset survey. The Town Council asked when Deep Cut was likely to be brought back into functional condition. Mr Ian Brown stated that work on Deep Cut had started 2 weeks ago and that new activity in this area was planned. The Town Council mentioned that development of the tow path was desirable particularly to make it disability compliant.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ian Brown and Mr Andrew Smith for their presentation.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 5: MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved to approve the minutes and the confidential minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2011 with alterations to the statement regarding Cllr Butler leaving the room for item 5, and not being invited back for item 6, moving this statement from item 4 to item 6.

Prop: CB Sec: RA

The following minutes of committees and partnership meetings were received by Council:

The Planning, Development and Control Committee 2011 10 October 2011. It was noted that Cllr Hope had given belated apologies for this meeting, as he had experienced a flood in his home just prior to the meeting.

The Planning, Development and Control Committee 24 October 2011

The Policy and Finance Committee 17 October 2011

The Confidential minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee 19 October 2011

The Highways and Transport Partnership 4 October 2011.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 6: INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIREMENTS

Cllr Appleton brought a proposal to Council that a working group be set up to discuss Highways infrastructure requirements in the light of possible new developments in Fleet. It was noted that the survey undertaken had shown that there was a strong perception that infrastructure had not kept pace with new housing, and that a deficit already existed with respect to highways, education and medical matters. A vote taken on this matter showed 9 councillors in favour and 2 against setting up a working group.

Resolved to set up a working group to debate infrastructure requirements. Terms of reference for this group to be presented to Council, as soon as the first meeting has taken place.

Prop: RA Sec: GC

Action: Councillors interested in this working group should put themselves forwards to the clerk by Friday 4th November 2011.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 7: REQUEST FOR INFORMATION/FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST

A proposal was put forwards by Cllr Woods that Fleet Town Council write to Hart District Council to ask for information on usage figures, waiting lists, accounts, and recent reports on the Hart Leisure Centre to help clarify whether this was a District wide facility made use of by residents across the district, or whether users primarily came from Fleet. This issue is pertinent as to how funding will be obtained for a new facility and to the response of residents to the Core Strategy questionnaire.

Council discussed whether the information should be informally requested in the first instance, before submitting a freedom of information request. It was noted that other parishes would be unlikely to have interests in this information, because they were not being asked to contribute S106 funding to the proposed new Leisure Centre. It was mentioned that the request to ask for information on waiting lists would certainly show that waiting lists existed, because there were always extensive waiting lists for children's swimming coaching. Concerns were raised about exactly what the survey undertaken by Fleet Town Council was telling the council. Issues such as funding future refurbishments costs were mentioned. It was felt that this was a matter the above mentioned Infrastructure Working Group could debate, as part of the Infrastructure requirements for Fleet.

Resolved to make further investigation into the proposed new Leisure Centre part of the terms of reference of the Working Group, and to charge the working group with meeting with Hart District Council's Head of Leisure services to find out the above information.

Prop: RA Sec: GC

F.C. NOV 11 ITEM 8: BUDGET

The Chairman informed Council that the aim was to present a proposed Budget to Council at the December meeting for approval. Council discussed the need for a preliminary discussion on budgeting issues to take place prior to the next meeting of the Policy and Finance meeting. A meeting was arranged on 14th November between 5 and 7 pm, prior to the Planning and Development Meeting, to discuss the revenue budget put forwards by the clerk.

Action: All council members who wish to attend this meeting to please note the date in their diaries. If council members are not able to attend the meeting, but wish to put forwards a comment for the meeting, please address these to the clerk in advance of the meeting.

The Chairman tabled a motion not to budget for capital expenditure or additional earmarked reserves until reserves had been built up to an appropriate level equivalent to a minimum of three months income. This would exclude limiting expenditure from existing earmarked reserves, which could still go ahead. The clerk advised that the recommended guidelines referred to income, not to precept, and that these recommendations were that councils hold between three and six months of income in general reserves. Projections show a possible additional £50000 reserve at the end of the financial year 2011/2012. Members felt that that this was a decision that could not be taken until the budget for 2012/2013 had been proposed and it was further recommended that at least two proposals in respect of the precept were considered and put forward to the Council.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 9: MEDICAL FACILITIES IN FLEET

A motion was raised by Cllr Appleton that the Council consider arranging a meeting with the Medical Consortium who are set to replace the Primary Care Trust. It was suggested that this item form part of the deliberations of the Infrastructure Working Group. It was noted that the item on the medical survey within the proposed Winter Newsletter was felt to be ambiguous. There was a need to establish from people which clinic/surgery they attended, to develop a body of evidence and contacts that could be called on to provide evidence of lack of medical attention, and also to investigate dental facilities. It was felt it may be premature to make contact with this newly established Medical Consortium.

Resolved to remove the medical survey from the next Newsletter, and postpone it to the Spring issue. Resolved also that the Infrastructure Working Group takes on, as part of their terms of reference, the responsibility for considering whether to contact the newly established Medical Consortium and that the Working Group should redesign the medical survey questionnaire.

Prop: CA

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 10: CLERK'S REPORT

Council received a clerk's report for noting.

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 11: CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Council discussed whether the next item should be treated as a confidential item. A vote was taken on this matter. There were 8 Councillors who voted for treating the matter confidentially. Cllrs Butler, Hurley and Appleton voted against the motion to treat item 15 under confidential matters.

Council resolved that, in terms of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public Section 1(2), by reason of the item referring to an individual/s and to confidential information, the Public and Press would be excluded from the following item on the agenda.

Prop: GW

F.C. NOV 2011 ITEM 12: YOUTH SERVICES

A paper was presented by Cllrs Schofield and Woods on funding for Youth Services in the forthcoming year’s budget. The provision of youth services was discussed by Council members.

Resolved to fund a provision for Youth Services in the forthcoming year’s budget to the same level as the 2011/2012 provision.

Resolved also to negotiate a lease with interested parties.

Resolved to work with all interested parties regarding appropriate youth services in Fleet to enable service providers to tender for Fleet Town Council projects.

Prop: CB Sec: RA

There being no further business the meeting ended at 10.42 pm.

The next meeting will be on the 7th December 2011, at the Harlington, at 7.30 pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....