



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 2 September 2015

at The Harlington at 7pm

PRESENT

Councillors Bob Schofield (Chairman), Steve Cattle, Grahame Chenery, Paul Einchcomb, Steve Forster, Denis Gotel, Leslie Holt, Alan Hope, Kathy Jasper, Alan Oliver, Dai Pierce, Richard Robinson, Jeff Smith, Neil Walton, Cllr Woods

Also Present

Janet Stanton-Town Clerk
Sheila Rayner-Committee Clerk

Mike Bye-Friends of Oakley Park
Sarah Horton-Event applicant (item 16)
Cllr Wendy Makepeace-Brown-HDC and Crookham Village PC

Cllr Schofield opened the meeting with the following statement

“Welcome back after the Summer break. I know a number of the Working Groups and the Planning Committee have carried on regardless – thank you. I believe we are going to have a busy time ahead of us and some opportunities to make some major decisions for this council and the parish at large.

It is inevitable that as the decisions get bigger and more costly there will be some more serious debate within the Council and some greater disparity of views and opinion.

It is important that all councillors accept that their fellow members have a right to an opinion and they need to respect that opinion and treat their fellows with the appropriate respect. Please remember that the Code of Conduct is not just about declaring prejudicial interests, but the manner in which business is conducted. Speeches should be kept impersonal and personal allegations of any sort should be avoided.

Please also remember that once a vote has been taken and a resolution approved, that is the resolution of the Council and all members, even dissenting ones, need to stand by that decision.

I believe this Council has performed its functions in good spirit and recognised that we are here for the benefit of the community, not for any personal credit.

*However difficult the debates may become I trust that you will all continue in the spirit of the Nolan Principles
Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership
This means promoting supporting and exhibiting the highest standards of conduct”*

ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllrs Gray and Wright

ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Following the recent torrential rainfall, Sarah Horton asked , on behalf of a local resident, who had responsibility for watercourses? It was explained that watercourses on private land were the responsibility of the landowner .

So far as other incidents were concerned residents were invited to submit details to Suzanna Hope of HDC as she was building a database of known problem areas

ITEM 4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Having confirmed that a request to consult on a Traffic Order had been registered with HDC (item 8) and confirmed that FTC had registered an interest as a Special Interest Group on the Basingstoke Canal JMC (item 10), the minutes of the Council meeting held 1 July 2015, were approved and signed by the Chairman

The Council received the minutes of the following meetings :

Development Control Committee 13 and 27 July and 24 August 2015

Establishment Committee (non-confidential) 22 July 2015

The Council approved the adoption of the recommendation at item 6 –

RESOLVED

In the event that sufficient savings could not be identified to fund salary increases, that the Council be asked to authorise additional funding for salaries from General Reserves

Establishment Committee (confidential-pink) 22 July 2015

Policy and Finance Committee 22 July 2015

Highways and Transportation Working Group 7 July 2015

The Council approved the proposed actions set out in the H&T notes

ITEM 5 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE AND NUMBER OF FTC MEMBERS

The members considered a report on HDC's proposed Community Governance Review (CGR) which allows principal authorities such as HDC to make changes to ensure that Parish Governance arrangements are convenient and effective.

The reason is that new housing developments are affecting the proportionality of the electoral representation between wards. The ideal is for votes to have an equal weight in all of the wards but this was not the case in Courtmoor ward, which is under represented, and Calthorpe ward which is over represented.

In addition the CGR will provide the opportunity to consider the overall number of councillors, the number of councillors per ward and the internal ward boundaries of FTC.

As a considerable amount of work was involved, the report suggested that a working group should be established

RESOLVED

That a Community Governance Review Working Group be set up, comprising Cllrs Robinson, Smith and Walton who, together with the Town Clerk, should deliver a preliminary review to Council by the end of March 2016

ITEM 6 BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) GRANT

The Chairman presented his report on the benefits of forming a Business Improvement District (BID). A BID is a collection of businesses that decide what improvements they would like to see in the town. Such a group had been formed with the support of Fleet Future called the Fleet Business Forum.

To secure a BID status the businesses need to hold a referendum of all the businesses within a designated area and secure a majority of more than 50% of the votes cast and more than 50% of the rateable value of the voting businesses.

Some very preliminary estimates have been prepared of the likely income from raising a BID levy which is expressed as a percentage of the Rateable Value of the included businesses in the Fleet area.

This preliminary exercise was necessary as it is important to ascertain if a reasonable level of levy can secure at least a BID Manager and a functioning budget to provide the type of activities that will improve the business area through, say, increased marketing or events to attract more visitors to the town.

The exercise which covered the majority of the high street, Reading Road South and Albany Road businesses, indicated that a 1.5% levy would provide adequate funds to achieve the desired income.

Preparing the formation of a BID is an expensive exercise, because there are regulatory requirements that have to be met including a formal referendum among all the potential businesses.

Regrettably central government grants to support BID preparation are no longer available and the Town Clerk warned of the importance of the correct application of S137 to proposed expenditure. An educated estimate of the cost of the screening survey is £15,000

The Business Forum is hoping for support from the County Council, The District Council and the Town Council, at best in equal contributions.

The potential benefits to the town could be significant, in publicity, the quality and the variety of events and improved facilities.

It was acknowledged that this is an opportunity for the Town Council to demonstrate its support of the Fleet Business community.

Following careful consideration and a lengthy debate it was

RESOLVED

- a) That the Business Forum be informed that in support of their fund raising initiative, FTC, as part of a tripartite agreement with HDC and HCC, and the invitation to Elvetham Heath, Church Crookham and Crookham Village Parish Councils to contribute, a sum of up to £5,000 be made available to support a BID screening survey.
- b) That as the Business Forum is not a legal entity the dispersal of monies and the application of S137 requirements be overseen by the Town Clerk

ITEM 7 PROPOSED BUS SHELTER CROOKHAM ROAD

Members were reminded of an earlier proposal to provide a bus shelter in Crookham Road with funding from NHTS. However, in view of the small number of passengers, the members considered that other projects may be more beneficial to a greater number of residents.

RESOLVED

To abandon the proposal to install a bus shelter at Crookham Road and to re-allocate the NHTS funding to, for example, footpath installation projects or any other project suggestions submitted by members to the Town Clerk

Cllr Forster wished to record his vote against the resolution

ITEM 8 HARLINGTON DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

The members considered a report on the progress of the Harlington Working Group.

Macallan Penfold Chartered Architects had submitted their feasibility study on locating the proposed new Harlington Building on either Gurkha Square or the Victoria Road end of the Victoria Road car park (the old toilet block) on the 5 August 2015

By a near unanimous vote (one dissenter) the Working Group elected to recommend to Full Council the development of the Gurkha Square site.

The working group remained of the opinion that, if possible, the library facility be included in the building.

As a consequence Macallan Penfold has been instructed to;

- Further investigate the development of a new building both with and without the library. This can be designed as a retro-fit as a third floor if the necessary decision from HCC is not immediately forthcoming.
- Explore the positioning and orientation of the new building on Gurkha Square to maximise the adjacent open public space. This is to take account of HDC's ownership of the access road between the car park and the Prince Arthur public house.

- Prepare some street scene elevations to demonstrate the relationship of the proposed building within the existing environment.

It is proposed to test public reaction to the outline scheme at the open day event on 31 October 2015

Once a practical, acceptable layout has been agreed a formal proposal will be submitted to Hart District Council for their consideration.

It was noted that the total cost of the feasibility studies will be approx £10,000

RESOLVED

To support the views and actions of the Harlington Working Group to progress to the next stage, with the proposals to be presented to Council on 7 October 2015

ITEM 9 FLEET LINK

The members were advised that the operation of the Fleet Link call centre had been transferred to RVA and this was likely to lead to a reduction in costs and the contributions required from funding partners after 2015/2016

The Deed of Agreement from HCC for the joint funding of the project was considered and it was

RESOLVED

To approve the Deed of Agreement and to authorise the Town Clerk, Chairman and Vice-Chairman to sign the Agreement on behalf of the Council

ITEM 10 PONDTAIL SCOUTS LEASE-HEADS OF TERMS

The members received and considered the amended Terms of the proposed transfer of the land at Farnham Road (leased to Pondtail Scouts) from HDC

RESOLVED

To accept only the Freehold Transfer absolute and unencumbered and provided that it is free from any outstanding litigation

ITEM 11 BASINGSTOKE CANAL SOCIETY

Further to previous discussion, FTC had applied to be considered as a special interest representative on the Basingstoke Canal JMC

The members received a copy of an anonymous open letter that had been published in the autumn edition of the Basingstoke Canal Society Magazine.

RESOLVED

That a suitable letter should be sent to the Basingstoke Canal Society confirming the Council's view that the anonymous letter should not have been published. Additionally the Basingstoke Canal Authority should be advised that FTC is awaiting their grant application for 2015/2016.

The Council will await the outcome of the JMC's October meeting regarding the application for the vacant Special Interest representative place

ITEM 12 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The meeting received the income and expenditure statements up to 26 August 2015 and the list of payments up to July 2015

RESOLVED

To receive into the minutes

- a) The Income Receipts statement up to 26 August 2015
- b) The Expenditure statement up to 26 August 2015
- c) List of payments for July 2015

ITEM 13 RISK MANAGEMENT

The members considered the recommendations of the Risk Management Working Group held on 1 July 2015 together with the summary of Risk Register and Action Plans

RESOLVED

To adopt the Risk Assessment document and Action Plans

ITEM 14 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR 2015/2016

The members considered the appointment of the internal auditor for 2015/2016 and

RESOLVED

To confirm the re- appointment of Eleanor Green, Do The Numbers, as the internal auditor for FTC for 2015/2016

ITEM 15 PARISH LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

The members were informed that funding in the sum of £3,000 had now been confirmed for the 2015/2016 Parish Lengthsman Scheme

RESOLVED

Members be invited to submit suggested projects to be funded from the Parish Lengthsman scheme funds, to be submitted to the Town Clerk

ITEM 16 EVENT APPLICATION-BUSES IN FLEET (considered after item 9)

Members considered an application from Buses in Fleet to hold an event in The Views on 19 September 2015

During consideration of the application members requested that a note be added to the standard event application form informing applicants that a bond of up to £1,000 would be required

RESOLVED

That subject to evidence of public liability insurance, a bond of £100, and a risk assessment document, approval be granted to the use of The Views on 19 September 2015 for a Buses in Fleet Celebration event

ITEM 17 PARKING UPDATE

The proposed HDC Cabinet Paper due for debate in September had been deferred until an unspecified date in the New Year.

The primary reason for the deferral is the parallel consideration by HDC to outsource parking services, which could include the provision of new parking payment machines.

The recommendation is scheduled to go to HDC Cabinet in January 2016

In the interim there will be a public consultation on either a block charging system i.e. £1 for 2 hours and £2 for 4 hours or a charge per minute at 1p/minute chargeable in 10 or 15 minute blocks.

The consultation will also explore the public perception of a Post Payment (PPP) charging, the equivalent of Pay on Exit

The opportunity will be taken to demonstrate the proposed parking machines at the Fleet Future/FTC Open day on 31st October and to assess public reaction to the proposed dual payment machines (Pay and Display or PPP (Pay on Exit)

ITEM 18 FLEET FUTURE/FLEET TOWN COUNCIL OPEN DAY

It was noted that Fleet Future/FTC will be holding an Open Day on Saturday 31 October 2015. FTC will take the opportunity to display information about the new Harlington, Neighbourhood Plan, Calthorpe Park, The Garden of Remembrance and The Views

ITEM 19 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr Gray submitted an update report

Neil Homer of Rcoh has been appointed . The company come highly recommended and regarded within the industry, and have had numerous Neighbourhood Plans cited at Planning Appeals

The composition of the Steering Group for the NP is under consideration. However at this stage it is expected that this will comprise three councillors and five representatives from the following community organisations: the HVA, Fleet and Church Crookham Society, Fleet Business Forum, CAB, and Fleet Future.

This is in anticipation of the first workshop which will occur in late-September, where a much wider stakeholder base will be invited to attend.

Following the workshop, the Steering Group will have a number of policy areas in which to work with and will continue along the path of creating an NP.

The NP may take up to a year to produce, after which it will need to be independently assessed before going to a public referendum

It was noted that Cllr Oliver had taken over chairmanship of the working group

ITEM 20 AMEMDMENT TO COMMITTEE MEETING DATE

It was noted that the Planning Committee will now meet on Tuesday 26 January 2016 (not Monday 25 January)

ITEM 21 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY ARRANGEMENTS

Members noted that this year's Remembrance Day event will be held on Sunday 8 November 2015. A service will be held in the Harlington followed by a Parade and wreath-laying ceremony. Refreshments will be served in the Harlington

Will volunteers please inform Janet or Charlotte of their availability as soon as possible

ITEM 22 FLEET FUTURE

Cllr Schofield agreed to circulate the membership of the Fleet Future Steering Committee

ITEM 23 HCC/HDC

HDC-Reported that approx. 60 properties in private roads would be receiving letters about the need to sign an indemnity due to dangerous road surface

ITEM 24 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

The Town Clerk's Report was received and noted.

The Town Clerk also referred to the following:

- Cycle event on 13 September 2015
- Xmas Switch on 25 November 2015-volunteers required
- Paint Fleet Pink event
- Floral displays in town centre to be taken down shortly
- gate chain at Merivale
- noticeboard in Gurkha Square

ITEM 25 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be held on Wednesday 7 October 2015 at the Harlington at 7pm.

The meeting concluded at 9.20 pm

Chairman.....

Date: 7 October, 2015