

MINUTES OF THE FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

7th December 2011 7.30pm
The Harlington

Councillors

Bob Schofield (Chair), Richard Appleton, Chris Axam, (for part of the meeting) Chris Butler, Paul Einchcomb, Sue Fisher, Steve Forster, Denis Gotel, Leslie Holt, Alan Hope, Helen Perthen, Dai Pierce, Andrew Macallan, (for part of the meeting) Sue Tilley, George Woods.

Also Present

Shar Roselman – Clerk
Mr Colin Taylor HCC (for part of the meeting)
Mr Dean Cronk HCC (for part of the meeting)
Cllr S. Wheale (for part of the meeting)
A member of the public (for part of the meeting)

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

Apologies were received from Cllrs Robinson and Chenery, and from Cllr A. Barrell.

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

Cllr Butler declared a personal interest in Item 8 as a member of HDC, and in item 13 as the District Representative on Sentinel Board. Cllr Forster declared a personal interest in the item under grant policy, as he is a member of the Carnival Committee.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 3: PUBLIC SESSION

A question was raised by a member of the public on item 9: Leases. He wished to know whether the council was pursuing the formation of a standard lease, and commented that if this was the case, then it was likely the council would be paying twice for legal advice as each lease would almost certainly have different clauses that needed to be negotiated. The chairman advised that Fleet Town Council had inherited a number of leases, with no standardization in policy, and the Town Council would like to approach future lease negotiations with a model document in place, based on an agreed leasing policy, but each lease would be site specific.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 4: PRESENTATION ON THE LENGTHSMAN SCHEME

A presentation was received from Colin Taylor and Dean Cronk of HCC on the Lengthsman scheme which has been in operation as a pilot project at small parishes in Hampshire. A parish Lengthsman is derived from the old-fashioned term meaning someone who lived in a village who looked after a length of road. Several years ago some of the Hampshire parishes expressed an interesting in obtain funds for such an individual to complete odd jobs that

contributed to the betterment of the neighbourhood. A few trials have been run, and HALC have now joined forces with HCC in helping to roll out the scheme across the rest of the county. It was mentioned that the things that are important to HCC Highways were not necessarily those items that were important to people living in a parish. Therefore HCC was providing funding for parishes to manage their own Lengthsman schemes. Two twelve months trials had been undertaken and several important lessons had been learned. The first trial took place in the Meon Valley, where 10 parishes joined together with one taking the lead in co-ordinating the parish requirements. Pilot scheme 2 was in the Tess Valley. There are also two new pilots coming up. However, the scheme has not as yet been launched in a larger parish or town council environment. Cllr Wheale had supported the scheme being introduced into Fleet. The advantages of running the scheme in a larger environment were that there was far less co-ordination needed, as the parish would not have to embark on the scheme with other councils. It was mentioned that the scheme was not intended to devolve work that should be done by the County onto the Town Council, but was instead a way of funding additional small scale work that was never-the-less important to neighbourhoods.

There are 4 partners in such a scheme:

- The Parish Council who would engage the Lengthsman, provide an annual programme of work, keep records of work undertaken, and advise HCC of what work is to be undertaken.
- The County Councillor – in this case Cllr Sharyn Wheale
- HALC, who would co-ordinate between schemes, and assist in providing cross scheme information.
- Hampshire County Council

The scope of the work could include HCC items such as drainage, signs, and other minor works, or work normally undertaken by either the District Council or the Parish Council.

The limitations on the scheme prevented work being done on illuminated signage, works in the live road, patching or structural repairs, or emergency call outs. Any work that was unsafe without skilled and highly trained workers armed with specialist equipment would also not be acceptable, but this was dependant on the contractor engaged. All such contractors would have responsibility for their own equipment and public liability insurance.

The timescales were that HCC were hoping work would commence in April/May. Therefore mid-February was the latest date by which Parishes would have to decide whether they wished to become involved or not.

The amount available, based on length of highway, to Fleet was £3000 per annum. It was considered by Fleet Town Council members that this could be allocated more fairly by population head.

The chairman thanked Colin Taylor and Dean Cronk for their presentation.

It was proposed that all members take home the documentation to study this before the January 2012 Full Council Meeting. A resolution would be taken at that meeting.

Action: All Councillors

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

Resolved to leave the minutes of the previous meeting, and the other confidential minutes to the end of the meeting to be dealt with within the confidential items.

Prop: CB

The following minutes of committees were received by Council:

The Planning, Development and Control Committee 14th November 2011

The Planning, Development and Control Committee 28th November 2011

The Policy and Finance Committee 21 November 2011. It was noted that the date of this meeting should be 21st November. It was mentioned by Cllr Butler that the minutes contained a resolution to put forward two proposals for precept to full council, but that one proposal had required further substance in the form of specific cost reduction proposals.

The minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee 16th November 2011

The Highways and Transport Partnership 29th November 2011. It was noted that these were draft minutes and still required some minor amendments.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 6: PRECEPT AND BUDGET

Council discussed the proposed budget and noted that with a 0% increase in precept there was a deficit of approximately £10000. It was mentioned that the Ground Maintenance Contract had gone up by approximately £40000 for the forthcoming year. Other increases in the proposed budget were a 4.6% increase on items not limited by fixed service level agreements and a proposed staff percentage increase of 3%. It was recognised that this was not a fixed across-the-board increase and would only be allocated on recommendation of the establishment sub-committee to deserving staff members, with any remaining balance going to the general reserve account. An allowance for additional staff recourses for central administration, and for legal services to negotiate the terms of ownership and management of a new Harlington had been incorporated into the budget. There was no sink fund for depreciation, and no reserves had been passed across from HDC. The current reserve level was therefore at approximately ¼ of the minimum recommended reserve for a council of this size. Increases in pitch fees offset minor increases in Town Centre floral displays and Christmas lights.

The Policy and Finance committee recommended a 2 ½% increase in precept, which amounted to little over a pound per household. However, if Council wished to aim at a 0% increase, then savings in line items within the budget would have to be made. Cllr Schofield suggested that one area to look at might be grant funding.

Cllr Forster suggested a pay freeze on all staff salaries. Cllr Appleton suggested that the precept be increased by 2% rather than the 2 ½% suggested by the Policy and Finance Committee as this was in line with what the District increased budget would be with the top up contribution from central government funding. It was noted that the Basingstoke Canal maintenance grant funding budget was very large, but it was likely that Fleet was bound into the fixed formula for a period of years. There was some debate over grant funding.

Cllr Butler proposed a 0% increase in precept on the basis that staff increases were removed, that the community communications budget was reduced back to £5400 and that the legal budget was reduced to £7500. He also recommended trimming £1000 from the grants budget to produce a break even budget, thus delivering a 0% increase in the budget. There was no seconder for this proposal.

Resolved to approve a 2 ½% increase in the precept.

Prop: BS Sec: GW

A vote was taken and the results were:

Cllrs Schofield, Woods, Appleton, Axam, Einchcomb, Forster, Gotel, Hope, Macallan, Pierce, and Tilley for the vote.

Cllrs Butler and Perthen against the vote.

Cllrs Fisher and Holt abstained from the vote.

It was noted that, having taken the resolution on the precept, the budget could still be amended. After some discussion alterations as follows were made to the proposed budget:

Resolved to reduce grant funding from £20000 to £12500 and to include the balance in the contingency which, at year end, if not used, would be automatically transferred to the general reserve account.

Prop: CA Sec: SForster

Cllrs Butler, Einchcomb, Fisher, Schofield and Woods were against the motion.

Cllrs Macallan and Holt abstained from the vote.

Cllrs Appleton, Axam, Fisher, Forster, Gotel, Hope, Perthen, Pierce, and Tilley were for the motion.

Resolved to accept the budget with the above amendment.

Prop: BS Sec: GW

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 7: CAPITAL PROJECTS CIL ITEMS

Council received a list of potentially CIL/S106 funded projects from the RLA committee. Council had been requested by HDC planning, to put forward a list prioritizing the top five projects, for these to be included in the 5 year planning strategy document.

It was suggested by Cllr Tilley that the following be considered when prioritizing projects:

Which projects benefit large segments of the population?

Which projects fit existing needs identified out of PPG 17, the HDC leisure policy?

Which projects might realistically be allocated CIL/S106 funding?

Cllr Butler suggested that particular groups who were currently devoid of capital expenditure items, such as teenage youth, could also be used to identify the top priorities.

It was agreed that Councillors would prioritize their top five projects and forward them to the clerk who would compile a consolidated list of priorities to be agreed at the next meeting.

Action: Councillors to urgently send the clerk their priority list, preferably outlining their thinking behind their priority list, to assist with writing up the formal CIL request documents. The clerk will analyse these for the next meeting.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 8: LDF CABINET MEETING HDC

Cllr Appleton gave an update on the Core Strategy. The view of the HDC officers was that nothing had been identified that was a material showstopper to the Core Strategy. However, there was a caveat because the impending NPPF might have a significant effect on HDC regarding the numbers of houses required in this area. The total amount was likely to be increased by 3500 additional homes.

HDC now had four options from which it could choose:

- To adopt the Core Strategy within its existing timeframe and carry on adding new additional numbers of homes to existing settlements.
- To adopt the Core Strategy but to shorten the time frame to allow additional planning work to begin.
- To not adopt the Core Strategy, and to risk development taking place without restriction whilst work is undertaken on a new strategy.
- To adopt the Core Strategy and hope that the NPPF will not derail it.

The consensus of the LDF Cabinet meeting was that the existing Core Strategy be sped up to cover a shorter time frame, to allow work to begin on another plan thereafter.

It was noted that HDC had mentioned that there were 235 responses in total to the LDF. But that 40 had come from Residents of Rushmoor related to the Guilemont Park development. However, the response from Fleet Town Council had included a survey response received from over 700 people.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 9: LEASES

As both the Basingbourne Scouts lease and the Cricket Club lease are up for renewal it was proposed that the council invest in some legal advice on drawing up a model lease agreement.

Resolved to approve up to £1000 for the development of a model lease.

Prop: BS Sec: SForster

Action: The clerk to obtain quotes.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM10: MISSION STATEMENT THE HARLINGTON

The working group had met on this subject, but a mission statement was still to be agreed. It was noted that the meeting with HDC under the project leadership of the HCC projects department had been postponed until January. It was mentioned that ideally the new building should be designed to reduce the cost of running the Harlington.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM11: TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE INFRASTRUCTURE GROUP

Council received the minutes of the first infrastructure group meeting which included the terms of reference for this group. The terms of reference were agreed in principle, although a few changes will still be made.

Action: Cllr Holt to send suggested alterations to the clerk.

It was noted that HDC had indicated that they were currently investigating infrastructure, and were willing to work closely with FTC on this subject.

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM12: GRANT POLICY

A paper was received from Cllr Schofield, clarifying that grants to festivity events should be classified as core client grants.

Resolved that the major event organisers identified in the FTC Event Policy are eligible to receive grants in consecutive years (Core Clients) and the monies so awarded will be drawn from budget item 110 Other Grants.

Prop: BS Sec: CB

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM13: ACCESS LICENCE CEMETERY ROAD

Fleet Town Council had approached Sentinel Housing to seek approval to use a short length of private road belonging to them to access the side road leading into Fleet Cemetery for waste disposal purposes.

A charge of £120 per annum was put forwards by Sentinel to obtain an access licence.

Resolved to write back to Sentinel stating that the Town Council felt it was inappropriate to charge for access that would be used no more than 6 times a year.

Prop: RA Sec: GW

F.C. DEC 2011 ITEM 5 - return to this item: CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Council discussed whether the next item should be treated as a confidential item. A vote was taken on this matter.

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: CB

Resolved to approve the minutes and the confidential minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 2 November 2011 with alterations to the word country, changing it to county in paragraph 3 line 4 on page 2, to the amounts of the shortfall in paragraph 7 on page 5, recognising that these figures were in the thousands, and to the statement “withdrawing funding from” in paragraph 1 on page 6, altering this to read “to continue funding the ...”

Prop: RA Sec: BS

Resolved to set down standing orders to allow the meeting to continue.

Prop: BS

Council received the confidential minutes of the establishment sub committee.

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

The next meeting will be on the 4th January 2012, at the Harlington, at 7.30 pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....