



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 5 October 2016

at The Harlington at 7pm

PRESENT

Councillors Bob Schofield (Chairman), Steve Cante, Grahame Chenery, Denis Gotel, Leslie Holt, Alan Hope, Richard Hunt, Kathy Jasper, Alan Oliver, Dai Pierce, Richard Robinson, Jeff Smith, Neil Walton

Also Present

Deborah Kirby Deputy Town Clerk
Sheila Rayner-Committee Clerk

Mark Foley – Burrill Foley and Fisher (BFF)
Aiden Ridyard –Burrill Foley and Fisher (BFF)

Cllr Forster-HDC
Cllr Wheale-HCC/HDC

Mike Bye-Friends of Oakley Park

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There was an apology for absence from Cllrs Einchcomb and Gray

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 7 September 2016 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

The Council received the minutes of the following meetings:

Development Control Committee 12 and 26 September 2016

Planning Committee 12 September 2016

RLA Committee 21 Septembers 2016

Item 12 was taken here before item 5

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 5 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW PROPOSAL

The members received and considered the report of the Corporate Governance Working Group on proposals to be submitted to HDC for agreement and onward transmission to the Local Boundary Commission in England.

It was reported that Members of the Working Group had considered the County Boundary review, looking at the parish, district and County boundaries to see if these arrangements best suited the local Community of Fleet.

It was noted that in 2010 when FTC was formed, membership of the Council was set at 19 Councillors. Since then, members had been keen to maintain electoral equality within the wards whilst still reflecting the identities and interests of the local community.

During the lifetime of FTC, it has never achieved its full quota of 19 councillors either through elections or co-option. In addition, most of the ward elections had been uncontested. It was suggested therefore that it would seem advisable to reduce the number of councillors in order to achieve a full Council with all members being elected.

It was proposed that 17 Councillors spread over 5 wards would provide a better rate of electoral equality whilst maintaining the identity of the local communities.

As a result of the completion of County Boundary Review, members had a serious concern regarding the Wickham Road Ward with one councillor representing 283 electors. It was felt, from a parish council point of view that adopting the recommendations within the County Boundary review would not be in the best interests of the residents of Fleet parish.

It was therefore proposed that the amalgamation of Court Manor, Court Moor and Wickham Road Wards would meet all of the above criteria.

Benefits of this amalgamation:

- Achieves a better Councillor to elector ratio
- All wards are south of the canal which forms a natural boundary
- All wards are within the same county electoral area supporting electoral efficiency
- Helps to integrate the residents of Wickham Road area into the local community
- Is a *better fit*. Residents will use the same local facilities eg schools, pre-schools and churches
- Basingbourne Park is the common recreational area with playground, pavilion, sports pitches/activities and woodland access to Courtmoor School.
- Provides the opportunity to reduce the number of councillors

Two proposals were considered:

Option A which allows for 18 Councillors and Option B which allows for 17 Councillors.

Community Governance Review Option A - 18 Councillors = 966 electors per Councillor

This option allows for the amalgamation of Courtmoor, Court Manor and Wickham Road and reduces the number of councillors in Central Ward to 5

Polling District	Parish Ward	Electors	Cllrs	Electorate / Cllr	Variance (%)
FB (2234) inc FD (1177) and FW (283)	Courtmoor (inc Court Manor and Wickham Road)	3694	4	923	-4.5%
FC	Fleet Central	5112	5	1022	5.5%
FH (1944) & FS (796)	Calthorpe	2740	3	913	-5.5%
FP	Pondtail	3977	4	994	3%
FA	Ancells	1868	2	934	-3.5%

Community Governance Review Option B – 17 Councillors = 1023 electors per Councillor

This option allows for the amalgamation of Courtmoor, Court Manor and Wickham Road and reduces the number of councillors in Central Ward to 5 and Courtmoor Ward to 3

Polling District	Parish Ward	Electors	Cllrs	Electorate / Cllr	Variance (%)
FB (2234) inc FD (1177) and FW (283)	Courtmoor (inc Court Manor and Wickham Road)	3694	3	1231	20%
FC	Fleet Central	5112	5	1022	0%
FH (1944) & FS (796)FH	Calthorpe	2740	3	913	-11%

Polling District	Parish Ward	Electors	Cllrs	Electorate / Cllr	Variance (%)
FP	Pondtail	3977	4	994	-3%
FA	Ancells	1868	2	934	-9%

Following discussion and after careful consideration it was

RESOLVED

To support the adoption of Option A which allows for the amalgamation of Courtmoor, Court Manor and Wickham Road and reduces the number of councillors in Central Ward to 5, for submission to HDC and onward transmission to the Local Boundary Commission in England

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 6 2016-2017 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT- TECHNICAL CONSULTATION

It was reported that a technical consultation had been received on the 2016-2017 local Government Finance Settlement

It was necessary to formulate an FTC response in time to meet the consultation closing date of 28 October 2016

Paras 3.3.3 and 3.3.4 proposed the future application of referendum principles to town and parish councils which have a total precept for 2016/2017 of at least £500,000-ie increases exceeding 2% will trigger a local referendum.

Any such referendum was likely to cost FTC in the region of £20,000

It was reported that HALC was so concerned about this proposal that the matter had been given the highest priority on the agenda of the HALC AGM to be held on 22 October 2016 in Hartley Wintney.

Members were invited to attend the AGM and/or submit their views to Cllr Schofield for onward transmission to the Association of Parish and Town Councils

RESOLVED

That the views of FTC regarding concerns about the referendum triggering proposal , be submitted to the Hampshire Association of Local Councils

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 7 FLEET BID SUPPORT

The members considered a report prepared by Cllr Schofield which sought FTC’s proactive support of the Fleet Businesses initiative to institute a Business Improvement District

The report set out the sequence of events regarding the formation of the Fleet Business Forum as a consequence of the Fleet Future’s Town Plan

The pioneer group of businesses had looked at the opportunities for securing the long term improvement and sustainability of the high street including its retail, commercial and entertainment businesses and concluded that a formal Business Improvement District (BID) was the most appropriate and effective way forward.

The Business Forum secured grants totalling £10,000 from Hampshire County Council, Hart District Council and Fleet Town Council to undertake a Feasibility Study to promote the BID concept.

The Business Forum had canvassed over 300 businesses within the designated area, sent out information packs, provided regular update newsletters and held workshops and is confident that they have the support of the majority of businesses within the BID area.

The next step is to move forward to the formal ballot

In 2015 the Town Council awarded a grant of £5,000 to the Fleet Business Forum to undertake the Feasibility Study.

By supporting the BID development, initial seed funding can secure in excess of £600,000 of income, contributed solely by Fleet businesses for the benefit of the high street and as a consequence the whole of Fleet. The vitality and sustainability of the high street is vital to the future of the whole Fleet community.

The following elements were carefully considered and discussed

- The Fleet Business Forum could seek another grant from the Town Council to take the whole process through to the ballot provisionally scheduled for March 2017.
- This is wholly reactive, whereas the Town Council should be seen as proactive and supporting our business community, the success of which is vital to the long term vitality and sustainability of our town.
- Hart District Council is committed to supporting the BID. Officers have been working with The Business Forum to establish work programmes, procedures for collecting the BID levy alongside the non-domestic rates payment and compiling the legal documentation that supports a BID application. HDC will be statutorily committed to undertaking the postal ballot and declaring the result.
- Fleet Business Forum members have been committing considerable personal time to keep the cost of development to a minimum. Although acknowledged as being smaller the Business Forum has kept the cost to a fraction of that expended by other local BID initiatives.
- The Town Council should be investing public money for the benefit of the community as a whole and this is a project that will deliver long term benefits to both the business community and the residents of Fleet. A flourishing High Street is at the heart of a flourishing community.
- Under our new powers endowed by the “General Power of Competence” we have the authority to support this initiative.

RESOLVED

- a) That Fleet Town Council allocate £5,000 to support the Fleet BID initiative.
- b) The money is taken from Reserves
- c) That payments will be made against invoices.

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 8 CHRISTMAS OFFICE CLOSURE ARRANGEMENTS

The members discussed the office closure arrangements of Fleet Town Council over the Christmas 2016 holiday period

RESOLVED

That the FTC office will close at 1pm on Friday 23 December 2016 and reopen at 9am on Monday 3 January 2017. FTC officers will be required to take annual leave to cover the period 28-30 Dec 2016

FC/ Oct 2016/ITEM 9 THE 2018 BOUNDARY REVIEW-INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES IN THE SOUTH EAST REGION

The content of the report was noted. The proposed changes had no direct effect on the Fleet electorate.

FC/ Oct 2016/ITEM 10 HART DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN

Cllr Oliver reported that the HDC Local Plan Spatial Strategy was due to be published on 11 October 2016 in time for consideration by HDC Cabinet on 18 October 2016

A special meeting of Hart District Council would be held on 20 October 2016 when the HDC Cabinet's recommendation would be considered.

It was noted that consultation on the spatial strategy would be held over a ten week period starting near Christmas time 2016

FC/Oct 2016/ITEM 11 DEVOLUTION

The members noted an information report following the attendance of Cllrs Chenery and Schofield at the HCC Devolution workshop on 12 September 2016. The consultation period closed on 20 September 2016

Members were of the view that the Government was likely to have other higher priorities in the coming couple of years and

RESOLVED

To note the current situation and await any further developments

The following item was taken after item 4 and before item 5 on the agenda

FC/ Oct 2016/ITEM 12 HARLINGTON DEVELOPMENT UPDATE

Cllr Schofeld introduced Aiden Ridyard and Mark Foley of Burrill Foley and Fisher (BFF) who had been selected as the firm of architects to take the Harlington project forward to the public consultation exercise in March 2017 and the announcement of the result at the Annual Residents' meeting on 28 March 2017

Aiden Ridyard gave a presentation on the culture, areas of expertise, method of approach and former clients of BFF.

The members received and noted an update report on the Harlington prepared by Cllr Schofield.

This explained the background to the appointment of BFF including the assessment of seventeen tenders and the interviews of the four preferred companies which had been received and assessed by the Harlington Working Group.

It was noted that a briefing document would be available within 3-4 weeks and by Christmas work on the outline of the three possible options (renovation/new build/repair) would be underway.

After Christmas the Council would be in a position to review and decide what it would like to include in the public consultation exercise.

The public consultation exercise would be launched by the end of January/beginning of February 2017

The members noted the current situation

FC/Oct 16/ITEM 13 HCC/HDC

HCC

Cllr Wheale reported on the following matters:

- The devolution debate
- The sink hole/blocked drain in Avondale Road-a TWA issue
- Future report on fly tipping

HDC

Cllr Forster reported on the following matters:

- The greatly improved refuse collection service which was due for re-tendering. The work of Cllr Oliver to assist in achieving the improvement was acknowledged
- The restricted hours of operation of the waste disposal centre

- Prosecutions for fly tipping
- Nuisances associated with the night time economy
- The Flood Forum- to focus on a different area at each meeting
- The success of Speedwatch especially in the Connaught Road area-requests for other areas to be submitted to Andrew McGill of Speed Watch.

FC/Oct 2016 ITEM 14 TOWN CLERK’S REPORT

The members noted the report of the Town Clerk which drew particular attention to:

- VAT issues
- Completion of leases with the Scouts at Calthorpe Park and Basingbourne Park
- The next issue of Town Talk to be delivered 17 October-4 November 2016
- Friends get together on 1 November 2016 at 7pm
- The tennis launch

FC/Oct 2016 ITEM 15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council will be on Wednesday 2 November 2016 at 7pm

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 8.20 pm

Chairman**Date.....**