



MINUTES OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

RESIDENTS' MEETING

31 March 2014

7.30pm The Harlington, Fleet

1) WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Cllr Schofield (Chairman of the Council) welcomed approximately 150 people to the fourth Fleet Town Annual Residents' Meeting. He explained that the meeting belonged to the residents and his role was simply to chair the proceedings. He introduced Cllr Woods, the Vice Chairman of the Council.

2) OUTLINE OF EVENINGS' EVENTS

After explaining the housekeeping arrangements for the evening, Cllr Woods thanked all the local organisations who had contributed to the evening through their various display stands. The organisations included Hart Lions, Hampshire Police, Fleet Pond Society, Minding the Garden, Fleet Future, The Basingstoke Canal Society, The Dementia Advice Service, Ewshot and Fleet Hockey Club, Friends of Basingbourne, The Guides, Fleet Girls, Friends of Fleet Hospital, Fleet and Church Crookham Civic Society, Trading Standards, and The Harlington

Cllr Woods explained that the Council would like to report on what it had achieved and sought the approval of the meeting to the previous year's minutes which had been circulated to everyone present.

The minutes of the third Annual Residents' Meeting held on 22 April 2013 were duly adopted as a correct record.

3) FLEET TOWN COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Cllr Schofield then reminded the meeting that FTC was 4 years old with elections to form a new Town Council to be held on 22 May 2014. The content of the meeting was rather like an end of term report. He explained the allocation of duties and powers between the various levels of local government.

Hampshire County Council including:

- Street Lighting
- Libraries
- Highways
- Education

- Minerals
- Trading Standards
- Social Services
- Cycle Ways

Hart District Council including:

- Leisure
- Planning/Building Control
- Parking
- Refuse Collection
- Housing benefit
- Homelessness
- Electoral registration
- Licensing
- Fleet Pond
- Country Park

Fleet Town Council including:

- Cemetery
- War Memorial
- Parks
- Childrens' Playgrounds in parks
- Harlington/Ancells
- Floral displays
- Xmas lights
- Annual Residents Meeting
- Town Talk/Leaflets/Website
- Support to local events/organisations such as British Legion, Carnival Committee, Fleet Festivities, Fleet Lions and the half marathon

Cllr Schofield reported on successes and progress since last year. He commented on improvements to the entrances to the town, the increasing number and range of activities at the Harlington and the town's first professional pantomime at Christmas time 2013. A 'What's On' Guide had been introduced and a reorganisation of the space at the Harlington had given a children's play space and a new box office and reception. The Comedy Club, Jazz and Blues Clubs were regular sell-outs.

Decoration at Ancells community centre had resulted in more use of the facility and parks were being greatly improved through the services of the Council's Ground Maintenance contractor and the work of the 'Friends' Groups .

Oakley Park had been recognised in the annual South and South East in Bloom Awards and Ancells had been awarded the Pegasus Cup. Two new play areas had been adopted at Edenbrook and Development Plans had been adopted for Calthorpe and Oakley Parks. Work was underway by 'Friends' Groups on development plans for Ancells and Basingbourne.

Fleet Town Council had considered approx. 2,000 planning applications during 100 meetings held since the Council came into being in 2010.

The Council was anxious to communicate with local residents and made use of Facebook, Twitter, its website, noticeboards, Fleet Life articles, press releases and Town Talk.

Cllr Schofield presented various charts giving information about FTC's services and the consistent level of its precept. The Council had started with a zero bank balance but had now managed to accumulate a small reserve so the Council's financial position was a healthy one as it is passed to the new Council in May. He commented specifically on the improvement of the financial performance of The Harlington significantly reducing the cost over the 4 year period.

Principal beneficiaries of the £47,000 paid in grants were the Citizens' Advice Bureau, Basingstoke Canal, and Fleet Link providing door to door transport. Others included Fleet Future, Fleet Festivities, Fleet and District Festival Committee, The Lions Community Store and Speedwatch.

The election to be held on 22 May 2014 was for European, District and Town Councillors. Fleet Town Council would be seeking to form a Council of 19 members across 5 wards. Cllr Schofield emphasised that the Town Council role was entirely voluntary and unpaid.

Cllr Schofield advised that due to ward boundary changes, Polling stations may be in a different location and electors should read their poll cards carefully to establish their polling station location.

Cllr Woods then referred to questions that had been submitted prior to the start of the meeting.

Barry Hunt, Fleet Cricket Club

The Cricket Club has been waiting for 4 years for its lease to be renewed. When will this be done?

Cllr Woods apologised unreservedly for the delay and assured Mr Hunt that this would be dealt with as soon as possible in the near future.

Mr P Robinson, Fitzroy Road

Why do you charge for the use of tennis courts when so many other sports facilities are free?

Cllr Einchcomb, the Chairman of the Recreation, Leisure and Amenities Committee, explained that tennis was viewed as a more formal use of the courts. He accepted that the courts were in need of resurfacing and the significant cost of this would be considered by the new Council after May 2014.

He also confirmed that the courts were free during Wimbledon fortnight when there is always a surge in demand.

He also confirmed that there was a charge for the use of football pitches by football clubs.

James Bittles, Peatmoor Close

What can FTC do to influence the introduction of 20mph zones in Church Road?

Cllr Schofield explained that evidence suggested that although some drive at excessive speeds, the majority of drivers drive within the limits. This prevents the introduction of 20mph but HDC do regularly use SIDs board in the area.

Allan Ferguson, Holland Gardens

Is there to be a cycle way between Fleet and Farnborough?

Cllr Schofield reported that funding has been made available through S106 monies from a recent development on part of the old Pyestock site. Cllr Wheale, HCC, clarified that part of the route was on MOD land, but it was proposed to carry out a Feasibility Study which should commence in April 2014

Marianne Parker, Elvetham Road

Please try to persuade the appropriate authority to introduce measures to reduce speeding (but not chicanes) and discourage owners from selling off their gardens for housing development

Cllr Schofield commented that the area was a possible trial site for the use of 'average speed cameras'

4) Fleet Future-Michael Butcher

Michael Butcher explained that Fleet Future was a community group which wanted to produce a plan that reflected the wishes of the community.

Following a consultation exercise 17 recommendations had been drawn up based on 1335 responses

The Plan had attracted credibility by influencing decision makers and HCC had even asked to use its methodology in how it addressed issues.

The Group had been allocated 2 seats on the HDC car parking review group and had been instrumental in setting up spin off groups such as the Fleet Film Club Group.

Areas of work included:

- More things to do
- Improvement of The Views
- Map of cycle routes and footpaths
- Cheaper, easier parking
- Business rates initiative
- Joined up transport and better access
- Empty offices
- Gurkha Square

Michael Butcher gave contact details for anyone who would like to help with the work of Fleet Future

Resident asked

Is it true that a Hong Kong Business Group had acquired the Hart Centre?

Michael Butcher said that he understood that was the case but no approach had been made by the Group to HDC

Resident asked

Could charging for car parking in Reading Road South be avoided?

It was clarified that this was a decision by the Basingstoke Canal Authority.

Adam Lacey, Glen Road

Congratulated Fleet Future on the numbers of feedback and hoped the Group could influence the planning process

5) The Changing face of Fleet

Cllr Schofield referred to the large developments at Ancells, QEB and Edenbrook but brought to the meeting's attention the 100 new homes built as infill or plot subdivision within the established urban area. Additionally between 600 and 800 new bedrooms had been added through the planning process. This was the equivalent to one new housing estate which appeared without anyone even noticing

The large increase in the number of care homes was pointed out and the importance of keeping the needs of young people as well was emphasised.

Cllr Schofield referred to the SHLAA and proposals for Edenbrook Village. There was concern about the growth of the area to the west of Fleet and the pressure on highways, schooling, medical services etc. The only new infrastructure to accommodate all this was an improved railway station with a new 100 spaces decked car park.

The HDC Local Plan had not been adopted because neighbouring authorities had not been consulted which meant that there was a lack of a substantive framework in which Developers needed to operate.

Cllr Schofield referred to the Pyestock site and the road works required before the site could be developed.

He also mentioned the extension to Farnborough Airport and the flight movements set to increase from 25,000 to 50,000 by 2019.

FTC's research into possible ideas for any replacement of the Harlington were explained including a range of other facilities in similar towns.

The options and implications for a possible development of the Harlington were still to be the subject of a report so refurbishment or replacement was still open to debate.

Kevin Whibley Local businessman and resident

We hope we can expect more openness , transparency and honesty with local residents in future ?

Is it true that Church Road car park could be under consideration for potential development?

Cllr Schofield confirmed that FTC were not party to any discussions and could confirm that both Victoria and Church Road car parks were being considered by the HDC car par review working party.

Cllr Gavin Evans of HDC confirmed that a developer had come forward regarding Church Road and were opening discussions with the Council.

Peter West, Pondtail Road

Does the Council regard the 'eyesore' of the new parking at the railway station as a good result?

Cllr Parker of HDC confirmed that the development was 'Permitted development' and neither HDC nor FTC had any control over the matter.

Mrs R Mackaill, Guildford Road

The entrance to Fleet at Pondtail badly needs to be improved. May this happen?

When will the Pyestock redevelopment take place?

Cllr Schofield hoped that a planning application would come forward to improve the shop/accommodation at Pondtail. The car wash and tyre centre were within the 400m exclusion zone of the SPA so planning permission to redevelop the area will not be forthcoming.

Regarding Pyestock, it is hoped by the developer that potential clients may be attracted by the levelling of the site but road works still need to be completed before any operations would be allowed on the site and there is a lot of existing vacant depot space available in the marketplace.

Dr Tuson, Connaught Road

Is there likely to be a new medical centre to meet the growing numbers living in Fleet?

Cllr Schofield commented that the medical authorities did not support satellite surgeries. The trend was to create more integrated facilities and these tended to follow the 'centre of gravity' of the population. This could mean a new centre near Church Crookham following the QEB and Watery Lane developments.

6) Final thanks

Cllr Woods thanked participants for their contribution, introduced and thanked fellow Town Councillors, HCC and HDC councillors, FTC officers and all the many volunteers.

There was a final reminder of The Election on 22 May 2014 and Action Day on Saturday 10 May 2014 meeting at the Harlington at 9.30am

The meeting was closed at 9.50pm