



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 7th November, 2019

Place

Council Chamber - Town Council Offices

Councillors

Councillor Pat Evans (Mayor)
Councillor Alan Earwaker (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor David Attfield
Councillor Roger Blishen
Councillor Carole Cockburn
Councillor Paula Dunsmore
Councillor Brian Edmonds
Councillor John "Scotty" Fraser
Councillor Michaela Gray
Councillor George Hesse
Councillor Michaela Martin
Councillor Mark Merryweather
Councillor Kika Mirylees
Councillor John Neale

Apologies for absence

David Beaman, Sally Dickson, Andy MacLeod and John Ward

Officers Presents:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk
Andrea Mann
Iain McCready, Business and Facilities Manager

There were 3 members of the public and no members of the press in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd Michael Hopkins of The Spire Church.

C91/19 0 Guest Speaker - David Munro, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey

The Mayor welcomed David Munro, Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Surrey, to the meeting who gave a presentation on the role of the PCC and the priorities in Surrey.

Mr Munro explained that he had held the position since 2016 and the next election would take place in 2020. The PCC role was to hold Police to account on behalf of residents.

A residents' survey had shown that residents had a high level of confidence in Police in Surrey but felt that Police visibility was not high enough to respond to certain crimes and perceived issues such as car crime, violent crime, anti-social behaviour, burglary, rural crimes, drugs and travellers. The poll also showed that approximate 75% of respondents were happy to incur a 10% precept increase to support an increase in Police to respond to these issues.

Additional funding was funding an uplift in Officers including doubling Youth Intervention Officers to help tackle anti-social behaviour. Mr Munro explained that crime and anti-social behaviour included less visible crimes which resulted in Police working differently in current times in order to solve these crimes.

Mr Munro responded to questions:

Cllr Edmonds commented that Surrey fared badly on government funding compared with other areas. Mr Munro agreed that the central government funding formula was flawed and reported that there were still plans to review this.

Cllr Merryweather asked whether the increase in Police Officers would be visible to residents? Mr Munro responded with the view that the Police would like to see a further 500 Officers but the increase would go some way to improving the position. He explained that much of the crime being investigated was intelligence-led and not street crime. Crimes were not generally solved by patrolling, however, the Police were still doing their best to maintain high visibility.

Cllr Cockburn commented that Police visibility was important with the rise in anti-social behaviour and the general lack of respect. Mr Munro felt the police had withdrawn too much but were reversing this. He also commented that the Police welcomed support from Councillors.

Cllr Neale asked whether there were any plans for a local Police office in Farnham town centre? Mr Munro confirmed that he was happy to engage in discussion to explore this on the proviso that 1) Car parking was available and 2) There were no intentions for a full Police Station in Farnham.

Cllr Martin reported that her conversations with retailers had identified high levels of shoplifting in Farnham and retailers had created a Whatsapp group to share concerns. Cllr Martin asked for suggestions to resolve this issue. Mr Munro sympathised with retailers and stressed the importance of reporting all incidents to the Police, commenting that individual incidents were unlikely to be attended but trends would be investigated in an attempt to proactively reduce crime. Mr Munro said that he was happy to speak to retailers directly on specific matters.

In conclusion, Mr Munro asked Councillors to report all specific concerns in their wards.

C92/19 0 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Beaman, Dickson, MacLeod and Ward.

C93/19 0 Disclosures of Interest

In addition to the standard declarations by dual or triple hatted Councillors, Cllr Merryweather declared a disclosable pecuniary interest on agenda item 8ii), Waverley

Borough Council Asset Transfers to Farnham Town Council, arising from his position as WBC Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services.

C94/19 0 Minutes

The minutes of the Farnham Town Council meeting held on 19th September were agreed to be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

C95/19 0 Questions and Statements by the Public

Mr Stone made a statement on behalf of the applicant of planning application: Lowndes End, Long Garden Walk West. Mr Stone said that the application was to retain the property as a bungalow and the changes proposed an attractive and architecturally pleasing design using local craftsmen and good quality materials.

The Mayor thanked Mr Stone for his comments and noted that the application would be considered later on the agenda under the Planning & Licensing Working Group notes of 28th October.

C96/19 0 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reported that she had attended over 40 appointments over the seven weeks since the previous meeting and it was an ongoing pleasure to meet those who worked or attended schools in Farnham. The following engagements were noted:

- The Farnham in Bloom Schools and Community Awards Ceremony
- The Britain in Bloom awards where Farnham won a gold in the business improvement districts, town centres and city centres category. The Mayor congratulated the team work of volunteers and Council officers.
- The Heritage Open Days and hosting a thank you reception for Heritage Open Day volunteers following the wonderful community effort.
- The 2020 Gin Festival had been a great success.
- The October Craft Month including a collaboration withn Scotland's Craft Town (West Kilbride) and the first World Craft City (Bornholm).

Forthcoming events included:

- A Schools' Remembrance service on 8th November.
- A Festival of Remembrance on 9th November at St John's Church.
- Farnham's Remembrance parade and service on 10th November at the war memorial in Gostrey Meadow.

The Mayor reported that nominations were being sought for the Services to Farnham Awards and the Community Grant application rounds were now open.

The Mayor said that she was proud to serve as Mayor of such a vibrant community.

C97/19 0 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Edmonds introduced the notes of the Planning and Licensing Working Group meetings held on 30th September, 14th October and 28th October, as presented with the agenda, noting that the working group faced four main challenges:

- i) The volume of planning applications.

- ii) The quality of the planning applications.
- iii) The length of time required to view the planning applications on the WBC online planning system due to the speed of downloading data. Cllr Edmonds reported that following a recent meeting with WBC, WBC had made several adjustments to the system which should improve the situation.
- iv) Concerns that the planning inspectorate was awarding costs to developers and that the local authorities should also claim costs from developers.

Cllr Cockburn said that planning responses which clearly defined statements on policies would help to minimise appeals and protect Farnham should an application go to an appeal. This was agreed and noted by Council.

C98/19 0 Questions by Members

There were no questions raised by Members.

C99/19 0 The notes of the Community Enhancement Working Group held on 23rd October 2019.

Cllr Martin introduced the notes of the Community Enhancement Working Group held on 23rd October, as presented with the agenda, and reported that there were no recommendations to be considered.

C100/19 The notes of the Strategy & Finance Working Group held on 29th October 2019

The Leader, Cllr Neale, introduced the notes of the Strategy & Finance Working Group held on 29th October as presented with the agenda.

The financial reports for the six month period 1 April to 30 September 2019 had been considered. These were considered to be in good order and in line with budgets at the half year point. The Trial balance, investments and debtors list had all been considered and the detailed papers had all been circulated to all members of Council. The Conclusion of the External Audit had also been reviewed and would be considered later in the Council agenda.

The Trees & Hedgerows Task Group was progressing the trees & hedgerows strategy.

The Infrastructure Planning Group had received an update on the Farnham Vision project noting that the planned community consultation would be delayed due to the forthcoming general election. Instead, a wider consultative group would be consulted and responses would be reviewed in the New Year.

The Leader reported an outstanding matter for SCC Highways to meet with FTC. FTC was still trying to engage with SCC on local highway projects, specifically plans for the A31 strategic route and Hickleys Corner. Cllr Cockburn raised concerns that FTC were not aware of any plans for Hickleys Corner and FTC had contributed £10,000 to the Vision Project to look at the whole town holistically. The Leader clarified that no consultation had taken place with WBC also.

Cllr Cockburn reported on a meeting she had attended with the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt MP and the Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. Several important matters had been raised on the apparent lack of respect for Neighbourhood Plans at planning appeals. Another interesting point regarding the 5 Year Housing Land Supply was discussed in that only 25% of developments with planning

permission had been built, impacting on the Neighbourhood Plan but there were no penalties for developers.

The Mayor thanked Cllr Cockburn for her invaluable knowledge and experience on the Neighbourhood Plan.

C101/19 **Waverley Borough Council Car Parking Consultation**

Members reviewed the draft response to the WBC Car Parking consultation, as presented with the agenda.

Cllr Attfield raised concerns over the prospect of evening or Sunday charging and it was agreed that this should be objected to.

Cllr Fraser raised concerns that access to car parks from Folly Hill and the North could not be achieved without going round the one way system adding to poor air quality. He proposed that there should be direct access to the Hart from Castle Street and that consideration should be given to limiting car parking in Castle Street which was of exceptional architectural quality. It was agreed to recommend that a review be undertaken for residents from the North of Farnham to access car parking without going through town

Cllr Merryweather supported Councillor Attfield and proposed that new technology should be used to facilitate flexible charging. Other councillors raised concerns over the limited enforcement in town with illegal parking causing congestion and there was a need for improved enforcement. In addition, the need for better lighting and signage at the Riverside Car Park was raised and the suitability of this car park for an additional deck given the topography.

The suggested additions were proposed, seconded and agreed and

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

To agree the response to the Waverley Borough Council Car Parking consultation as per Annex 1 with the additional points incorporated.

C102/19 **'Independent review into the arrangements in place to support the transparency and quality of local authority financial reporting and external audit in England'**

The draft response to the consultation, as presented with the agenda as reviewed and

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

To approve the response as set out at Annex 2.

C103/19 **Waverley Borough Council Asset Transfers to Farnham Town Council**

Cllr Merryweather declared his interest and left the Council meeting.

The Leader introduced the recommendation from the Strategy & Finance Working Group that FTC accept land transfers from WBC on a freehold basis. It was noted that, taking on the maintenance costs straight away would incur running costs circa £50k and the management of these spaces would be undertaken by staff and volunteers.

It was RESOLVED, with one objection (Cllr Edmonds),

- i) That Farnham Town Council accept the freehold transfer of the following land with effect from 1st November 2019 acknowledging the potential annual costs of circa £50k:

**Battings Garden
Hallifax Gardens
Haren Garden
Homepark
Riverside Hatchmill
Riverside Maltings
Gostrey Meadow
Evelyn Borelli Garden of Rest**

- ii) For the Town Clerk to negotiate the best deal for the transfers and appropriate contributions where achievable.

Cllr Merryweather returned to the meeting.

C104/19 The notes of the Tourism & Events Working Group held on 5th November 2019

Cllr Earwaker introduced the notes of the Tourism & Events Working Group held on 5th November and clarified that comments to the draft risk assessment were requested by 15th November and not 15th December. There were no recommendations for Council consideration.

Cllr Cockburn commented on the older age range attending the Music in the Vineyard event which should be considered when selecting the performers.

C105/19 The Notes of the Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group held on 7th November

Cllr Cockburn introduced the notes of the Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group held on 7th November from which there were no recommendations for consideration by Council.

Cllr Cockburn commented on two matters:

- i) That the photographs of the wild flowers in West Street Cemetery should be used for a press release.
ii) The Hale Chapels would be reviewed in the new year

C106/19 Conclusion of the External Auditors Report 2018/19

The Leader explained that the minor matter reported related to the manuscript amendment in Section 2 referring to the estimated outstanding Public Works Loan Board figure previously reported. Full Council had approved the correct figure but the draft version of the annual return had been submitted in error. Council noted that there were no other matters raised.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that Council receive and adopt the unqualified Audit from PKF Littlejohn in relation to the 2018/19 accounts.

C107/19 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

The Town Clerk reported on responses received from Surrey County Council:

- i) FTC's request to SCC to consider its policy on removing the entire tree when removing trees by the highway –
SCC had responded saying that all works were prioritised but limited funds did not allow for the entire tree to be removed. Residents or local councils could consider carrying out or funding this work. The Town Clerk considered that this was an unsatisfactory response because of the damage to the street scene and amenity of local residents.
- ii) FTC's request to SCC to consider re-establishing the Farnham Task Group of the Local Committee
SCC advised that all committees had ceased due to lack of resources to deliver new projects. The Town Clerk would pursue this matter further as it had completely missed the point that FTC wished to consider how it could use CIL to support highway and other SCC schemes.

The Town Clerk also reported that FTC's bid of £1 (plus ongoing maintenance costs) for Tice's Meadow had not been accepted. FTC was working closely with WBC in continuing negotiations and a recent meeting with the landowner had been positive. However, it was evident that the landowner expected to generate income from the land and the outcome remained uncertain.

C108/19 Reports from Other Councils

There were no reports from other Councils.

C109/19 Reports from Outside Bodies

Cllr Attfield, on behalf of Cllr Beaman, provided an update from the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership which met on 11th October.

It was reported that for the year 2018/19 ending 31st March total expenditure was £419,032 against which there was fee earning work of £315,434 - most of this is, however, paid by Hampshire County Council for site management. The balance was accounted for by partner contributions (including £1,500 from FTC), interest received and by drawing on reserves of £11,249. The budget had only envisaged having to draw on reserves of £1,000. The budget for the current year envisages a further draw on reserves of £29,000 to balance the books.

This situation was considered to be unsustainable and there was concern that BVCP was dependent on Hampshire County Council for a significant proportion of its fee earning work. It was noted that BVCP did not receive any financial support from either Surrey or Waverley.

C110/19 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting of full Council was agreed as Thursday 19th December 2019 at 7pm.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Chairman

Date

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FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Annex I Council

Time and date

Thursday 7th November, 2019 at 7pm

Place

Council Chamber – Town Council Offices

Response to Waverley Borough Council Car Parking Consultation

1. What is your vision for your area (e.g. growth, economy, retail, tourism/leisure, workplace patterns, demographics, etc)? How does parking support or hinder this?

Response:

- Adequate parking for residents, businesses, shoppers, commuters and to support retail, travel and tourism.
- Affordable parking charges.
- Pay-on-exit technology.
- No increase in on-street parking, unless income is ring fenced for Farnham.
- Parking solutions which do not increase congestion and air pollution in the town centre.

2. What are the key parking related issues (including on-street) and what is causing these?

Response:

- Number of parking spaces – the number of spaces has been significantly reduced followed the closure of Dogflud Way car park leading to increased traffic and air pollution in the town centre.
- Car parks on the outskirts of the town centre (St James, Riverside 2 and 3) never appear to be fully occupied, are badly lit and not promoted well.

3. What would be your recommendations to improve parking including any parking management solutions (e.g. amount of and location of parking, length of stay, tariffs, etc)

Response:

- Pay on exit supported by ANPR technology - to encourage more residents and visitors to come into Farnham and stay longer, resulting in increased footfall for the retailers and leisure outlets of Farnham – if this use is permitted by local authorities.
- A review of parking charges – eg a small evening charge could increase income without the need to raise daytime charges excessively.
- Smarter charging.
- To maximize use of the car parks on the outskirts of the town centre.
- Dedicated parking for commuters.
- Parking for low income retail and caring staff.
- Direct access to Hart Car Park from Castle Street.
- A comprehensive review of traffic flow and spaces in north of the town.
- Traffic Wardens and enforcement of the Farnham town centre gyratory system to ensure traffic flow.

4. Are there any other transport related interventions that you believe may help?

Response:

- Park and ride – should developments at Coxbridge Farm, Wrecclesham area and the Northbrook development site go ahead, a Park and Ride close to the Coxbridge Business Park could be viable.
- For on-street parking to be controlled by one authority.



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Annex 2

Council

Time and date

Thursday 7th November, 2019 at 7pm

Place

Town Clerk Office – Town Offices

No.	Question	Suggested Response
Q1	Who, in your opinion, are the primary users of/main audience for local authority accounts?	Electors, Councillors and Auditors.
Q2	Who are the other users of local authority accounts? Are any of these users of accounts particularly important?	Government bodies – to collect statistics.
Q32	To whom should external auditors present audit reports and findings?	Full Council. To ensure a process where all Councillors review the auditor's decision and allow Councillors to be truly accountable for the authority. This also supports a robust democratic process by preventing a committee such as a resources committee to have higher powers than the full council.
Q33	In your authority, what is the membership of the audit committee (number of members, how many are independent etc) and which officers typically attend?	The Strategy & Finance Working Group monitors the Council's budget and reviews audit reports and makes recommendation to full Council which has overall responsibility. Membership includes the Leader, committee chairmen and 4 other appointed members plus Mayor and Deputy Mayor ex-officio. The working group is supported by the Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer and other managers.
Q34	How should local authorities track implementation of recommendations made by internal audit, external audit and relevant statutory inspectorates? What should the external auditors do if recommendations are not being implemented?	By ensuring that a report of actions taken in response to audit reports is presented to Council to confirm action for subsequent consideration by the Council's internal auditor. Should the recommendations of internal auditors not be implemented, the external auditor should include an advisory note in audit completion reports and make this a requirement for the following year. External auditors should have the authority to escalate matters which have not been actioned.

Q35	Should there be a role for an external body in tracking action taken in response to modified audit opinions and/or statutory recommendations and public interest reports? If so should that responsibility sit with MHCLG, the sector specific oversight body recommended by the Independent Review of the Financial Reporting Council or another body?	In the experience of Farnham Town Council the number of modified audit opinions and public interest reports for smaller authorities would not necessitate another external oversight body.
Q43	For smaller authorities, does the inspection and objection regime allow local residents to hold their council to account in an effective manner and is the cost of processing and responding to objections proportionate? If not, how should the regime be modified?	The smaller authorities are required to hold an annual meeting of electors. The inspection and objection regime allows locals residents to hold their council to account but the burden of the cost of processing these objections can be high for a smaller authority.

The closing date for responses is 22nd November at 5pm.