



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 14th May, 2020

Place

Held remotely via Zoom

Councillors

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

Apologies for absence

Michaela Gray

Officers Presents:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk
Iain McCready, Business and Facilities Manager
Sara Jones, Assistant Town Clerk

There were 7 members of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd John Morris of the Bourne Parish.

C1/20 New Regulations-Remote Attendance

The Mayor introduced the Remote Meetings Protocol at Appendix A which were proposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and *'The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and*

Wales) Regulations 2020' which had come into force. These Regulations specifically part 2, regulation 5, enable the remote attendance of committee meetings and therefore overrule any applicable FTC Standing Orders until further notice or May 2021 when the Regulations lapse.

Everyone in agreement with the protocol and that there was no need to change standing orders

It was **RESOLVED** *nem con* to adopt the new protocol.

C2/20 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Michaela Gray.

C3/20 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council meeting held on 12th March 2020 at Appendix B were agreed to be signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

C4/20 **Disclosures of Interest**

In addition to the standard declarations by dual or triple hatted Councillors, Cllr Merryweather as the relevant Portfolio holder at Waverley Borough Council for Agenda item 8ii (Appendix D) in relation to the transfer of assets.

C5/20 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

Mr Clive Teague spoke of the Government announcement on 9th May local authorities are expected to make significant changes to road layouts to give more space to pedestrians ensuring that they can maintain a safe 2m social distancing. As many potential shoppers might be put off stepping into the busy car lanes as the lockdown eases, Mr Teague asked if the Council urgently widen the town's narrow pavements and welcome help from the public in achieving this.

The Mayor thanked Mr Teague for his question and responded the recently published Government guidance entitled 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) Safer Public Places- Urban Centre and Green Spaces' would be identified later in the meeting and Council would decide how to proceed on this issue.

C6/20 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Town Mayor reported Council had last met 9 weeks ago prior to Lockdown and much had happened and social contact was still restricted.

This meeting was the first Remote Council Meeting using ZOOM. It would be a learning curve for everyone, not least the Mayor as Chairman. The Mayor expressed heartfelt thanks and gratitude to every individual and organisation supporting the Farnham community at this exceptionally difficult time. An incredible amount had been achieved and to each and everyone there was an enormous debt of gratitude.

The Mayor advised there would be a break for the weekly 'Clap of Thanks' at 8 o'clock for the incredible NHS, carers, emergency service providers, those who continue to supply food and transport, volunteers and support staff including those from Farnham Town Council. The Mayor said she was immensely proud of everyone.

The Mayor advised it was important not forget those who had lost their lives to COVID-19 and their families who grieve for them and asked for a moment of silence in their memory.

The Mayor advised that on the VE Day anniversary she observed the Silence at 11 am wearing the Mayor's Chain of Office and that she had also participated in an on-line service of Thanksgiving for the NHS.

C7/20 Questions by Members

None were received.

C8/20 Tourism & Events Working Group

Cllr Earwaker introduced the notes of the Tourism and Events Working Group held on 25th March at Appendix C and updated Council on actions taken since the lockdown started:

He advised that the last two Music in The Vineyard events were cancelled along with the April Farmer's Market.

The April farmers' Market was cancelled but May would see the first farmers' market held under social distancing measures, with a new layout, only one person at a stall and controls on how many people entered the market area. In response to a question from Cllr Edmonds, Cllr Earwaker confirmed a covid risk assessment had taken place.

All other events due to happen had been postponed until further guidance was issued.

C9/20 Strategy & Finance Working Group

Cllr Neale introduced the notes of the Strategy & Finance Working Group held on 5th May at Appendix D.

C10/20 Finance Report

Cllr Neale advised that the Finance reports would be taken under agenda item 9.

C11/20 Coronavirus Update

Cllr Neale reported on the key activities being undertaken during the Coronavirus Pandemic:

i) Decisions under delegated authority

Members of the Working Group had received an update from the Town Clerk on the regular meetings held between the Town Clerk, Mayor and Leader in accordance with the delegation agreed at the last Council meeting.

ii) Actions to support the Community

- 1) The Farnham and Villages Coronavirus Helpline.
The Helpline was a co-venture between Farnham Town Council and the Farnham Maltings to support the shielded, vulnerable and isolated members of the community. To date it was reported that the Helpline had responded to over 900 requests for help.
- 2) The Coronavirus Co-ordination Group.
The Co-ordination Group was a co-venture with the Farnham Maltings that consisted of over 20 weekly attendees who represented local charities and local

- Coronavirus response groups. Each week via a Zoom call the participants discussed areas for support, the sharing of resources and new requests for help.
- 3) Coronavirus Support Fund.
FTC had coordinated a group of representatives from local charities to create a new hardship fund financed from local charities, public donations and FTC. The Coronavirus Support Fund would review applications from referral agencies or individuals themselves experiencing financial hardship due to the Coronavirus situation. To date the Fund had raised over £28,000 made four financial awards for immediate help.
 - 4) Share Farnham Community Store.
Share Farnham was a joint project led by the Farnham Maltings and involved Hale Community Centre. Share Farnham opened on Tuesday 12th May to serve the community in Farnham and Upper Hale providing an opportunity to share donated activity-based items focused on supporting the mental wellbeing of the community.
 - 5) Farnham Hospital Assessment centre.
FTC in collaboration with the Farnham Hedgehogs and Farnham Lions and the Farnham Integrated Care Service had built the outdoor assessment centre in the Farnham Hospital Carpark and co-ordinated the volunteers to be the carpark marshalls.

Cllr Neale commented on the need to look forward to a recovery phase to support the community and local businesses and noted FTC officers were looking into options.

C12/20 **Safe Streets**

Cllr Neale reported on the proposed pavement widening initiative in the town centre that would help the community to socially distance and allow retailers to provide a safe queuing space outside their premises. It was commented the Council would need to consider a range of options and related safety issues.

Cllr MacLeod advised that the roads and pavements were the responsibility of SCC and that the safety of the public was the first priority of SCC, and there would be safety implications to the pavement widening project.

Councillors expressed support for the project and concern for the logistical challenges of such a project, the impact this would place on roads that were not in the town centre and the challenges when considering the local retailers who had no rear access to their premises.

The Town Clerk suggested the formation of a task group that would report into the Strategy & Finance Working Group to focus on recovery. With the suggestion the group could look at the pavement widening issue as a priority action point.

7.55pm - Councillors took a break from the Zoom meeting to join the Nation to clap support for the NHS and key workers.

8.05pm Council resumed.

It was suggested that a task group could look at the detail of the proposal to then forward to the Farnham Project Board (all three Councils would be represented on the Board) to authorise swift action.

Cllr Ward proposed and Cllr Merryweather seconded the recommendation that:

FTC ask the Farnham Project Board to look at the urgent narrowing of the roads to widen the pavements in line with Government guidelines so that pedestrians can shop and queue in safety.

Cllr Neale proposed and Cllr Merryweather seconded the recommendation to Council to agree that:

FTC create a Task Group that reports into the Strategy & Finance Working Group, to agree initiatives needed in response to the COVID-19 situation.

It was RESOLVED *unanimously* that FTC:

- 1) Ask the Farnham Project Board to look at the urgent narrowing of the roads to widen the pavements to enable pedestrians to shop and queue in safety;**
- 2) Create a Task Group that reports into Strategy & Finance Working Group to agree initiatives needed in response to the COVID-19 situation.**

It was agreed that members on this Task Group be: Cllrs Blishen, Hesse, Martin, Merryweather, Mirylees, and Neale.

C13/20 Proposed deferment of Annual Meeting until 2021

Council noted that a decision had been made under delegated authority to defer the Annual Meeting of Council whilst the Council was unable to meet formally.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

The Annual Meeting be deferred until May 2021 with the extension of the terms of office of The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Leader along with members of the Working Groups, Task Groups and Panels.

Council noted the events programme was deferred and that the launch event and other activities for Farnham in Bloom were either postponed or cancelled and that judging of Farnham in Bloom was to be held remotely for 2020. It was further noted that a revised budget would need to be prepared to take account for the loss of income and potential sponsorship.

C14/20 Contracts and Assets Update

Cllr Merryweather recorded an interest in the transfer of assets and was moved to the Zoom remote waiting room and took no part in the discussion.

Cllr Neale commented that draft documents were available for the transfer of assets from WBC to FTC with some queries being resolved through the Council's solicitor. Councillors discussed the potential acquisition of Montrose House from WBC and suggested the intended purpose of use could be to assist in the development of craft businesses in town. It was agreed the Town Clerk should discuss the parameters further and report back in due course.

Cllr Merryweather returned.

Insurance

Council noted that the Working Group had endorsed the decision made under delegated authority to waive Standing Order Contracts and extend the Council's insurance with Zurich for three years at a reduced cost and with extended cover.

C15/20 **Farnham Project Board Terms of Reference**

Cllr Neale advised that members of Strategy & Finance Working Group had discussed the Farnham Project Board's Terms of Reference (ToR) in detail and had proposed changes for consideration by Council.

Cllr Neale introduced a supplementary paper setting out Key Principles and Objectives to amplify and give clarity to the Project Board Terms of Reference from a Farnham Town Council perspective.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Farnham Project Board was Friday 22nd May and it would be helpful to have agreement on both documents before then for the Board's consideration.

The Town Clerk advised that as the Key Principles document had not been discussed at the Strategy and Finance meeting there would need to be a proposal and seconder for the supplementary recommendation.

Councillors discussed the two recommendations. Cllr Merryweather said the ToR could not be agreed until the Key Principles had been agreed as the Key Principles set out the basis on which FTC would be agreeing with Surrey's proposals.

In discussion Council agreed the need for FTC to work with the Farnham Project Board as an equal partner and to be involved with the decision making at the early stages to enable the right decisions for Farnham to be made.

Councillors agreed each recommendation affected the other and agreed to a proposal, proposed by Cllr Merryweather and seconded by Cllr Hesse, to merge the recommendation to Council.

The new recommendation to Council to be discussed was:

The proposed amendments to the Farnham Project Board Terms of Reference be agreed and be accompanied by the Key Principles and Objectives document attached at Annex I, to be adopted by the Farnham Project Board, and forwarded to Surrey County Council.

Cllr Merryweather said that point 13 of the Key Principles needed to have the wording to include less able-bodied giving access for all not just for pedestrians and cycles. This was agreed.

In discussion other Councillors noted the matters raised in the Strategy & Finance notes including:

- the draft ToR included policy matters such as planning and 5G that seemed beyond scope.
- the Regenco document was 'draft' and not 'extant'.
- the preamble seemed to include matters not included in the objectives.
- there were some phrases (such as meaningful co-design) required clarity.
- there was need to reference the whole of Farnham.
- The emphasis on working together on an exemplary project was welcome.

and also commented that the SCC Vision 2030 was very general and needed more focus for Farnham related matters.

It was RESOLVED *nem con with one abstension* that:

The proposed amendments to the Farnham Project Board Terms of Reference be agreed and be accompanied by the Key Principles and Objectives document attached at Annex I for adoption by the Farnham Project Board, and be forwarded to Surrey County Council.

C16/20 Approval of Annual Accounts 2019-20

The Town Clerk introduced the financial year end documents that had already been circulated to all Councillors and discussed by Members of the Strategy & Finance Working Group.

These included:

- i) Draft Financial Statements for 2019/20 and earmarked reserves at 31st March 2020 at Appendix E;
- ii) 2019/20 Income and Expenditure Outturn and associated documents at Appendix F;
- iii) The final Internal Auditor's Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2020 at Appendix G;
- iv) The Annual Governance Statement (Section I of Annual Governance and Accountability Return) at Appendix H;
- v) The variances list between the 2018/19 and 2019/20 Annual Returns at Appendix I;
- vi) The Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year Ended 31 March 2020 at Appendix J

Council welcomed the contribution to general balances of £19,063 after receipts in advance and agreed transfers for Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 contributions and agreed earmarked reserves had taken place. Council noted the above expected additional income received and previously reported, had been partly offset by decisions on agreed expenditure on specific project activity during the year. The proposed adjustments to the earmarked reserves were agreed.

Council welcomed the clarity of the documents that made the end of year accounts understandable and thanked those involved in their production.

It was RESOLVED *nem con with two abstentions* that:

- 1) The Annual Governance Statement (Section I of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) be approved;**
 - 2) The Internal Auditor's report and officers' comments be agreed;**
 - 3) The updated Asset Register be approved;**
 - 4) The Report and Financial Statements for 2019/20 be adopted for signature;**
 - 5) The variances list for the Annual Return be agreed;**
- The Annual Governance and Accountability Return and associated papers be approved for signature and submission to the External Auditor.**

C17/20 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Edmonds introduced the notes of the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group meetings held on: 16th March, and 30th March, and 20th April and 4th May 2020, appendices K, L and M to the agenda.

Cllr Edmonds commented the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan was critical in delivering democratic planning but not always evident in the planning applications.

Councillors were reminded to forward any observations on planning to Cllr Edmonds and the Consultative Group.

C18/20 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

The Town Clerk commented that he had been updating the Councillors on actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation and would prepare a formal list of decisions taken under the Coronavirus Scheme of delegation.

C19/20 Reports from Other Councils

Cllr MacLeod reported that SCC were bidding for electric bus towns and had proposed that Farnham should be one of the towns chosen to be an electric bus town.
The Town Clerk confirmed he would draft a letter of support from FTC as the initiative was aligned with FTC policy.

Cllr Ward commented he would be happy to take questions on the WBC webcast from Tuesday evening.

C20/20 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

C21/20 Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 25th June

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.37 pm

Chairman

Date