



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

6.30 pm on Thursday 29th April, 2021

Place

To be held remotely via Zoom - Zoom Remote Meeting

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 Wicks

Officers Presents:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk
Katie Knowles, Governance and Community Engagement Manager

There were 2 members of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd John Morris of St Thomas-on-The Bourne.

C161/20 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Wicks.

C162/20 Disclosures of Interest

In addition to disclosures of interest for dual and triple hatted-councillors, Cllr Merryweather declared an interest in relation to his role as a Governor of the Royal Surrey Hospital Trust.

C163/20 Minutes

The minutes of the Farnham Town Council meeting held on 11th March 2021 and the minutes of the adjourned meeting held on 17th March were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

C164/20 Questions and Statements by the Public

Dr David Brown read out a joint statement regarding the Government's White Paper, Integration, and innovation: working together to improve health and social care for all. The joint statement was on behalf of Primary Care Networks from Slough, Maidenhead, Surrey Heath and North East Hampshire & Frimley Integrated Care System (ICS).

Dr Brown considered the proposals threatened the existing health and social care integration work at Frimley Health and Care Integrated Care System (ICS). The threat related to the Government's drive for coterminosity, the desire that upper tier local government such as Surrey County Council would only interact with one ICS (at present they liaise with two).

This case for change is not supported by general practitioners within the integrated care system and the primary care networks across Frimley healthcare ICS and stated the following:

"The Primary Care Networks (PCNs) across Frimley healthcare do not support the proposed changes. The PCNs in Surrey Heath, East Berkshire, North East Hampshire and Farnham have been and remain committed and collaborative partners within the Frimley healthcare integrated care system. PCNs are focused on keeping patients central in any decision making and do not support change for change sake, not at least that detract from providing consistently high quality care. The success of Frimley healthcare ICS has been developed overtime through multi-level partnership working and is lauded a national ICS exemplar. As such it has already proved itself as a highly performing system and the best ICS in England. Whilst the PCNs remain within Frimley healthcare ICS together with its achievements and future plans, do not support the dissolution of our successful ICS without a strong and demonstrable rationale, which focuses on the proving the quality health care services of our populations and the workforces within it."

The Town Mayor accepted the statement on behalf of the Farnham Town Council and thanked Dr Brown and Dr Wernick for attending and advised the matter would be discussed later in the meeting.

C165/20 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced this would be the last business meeting of the year. She commented that the previous year had been unexpected and unusual. Although under Covid rules and regulations, council business had continued and progressed. It had been a year of lockdown that included the Mayor's commitments and diary. The Mayor's coffee mornings that were held virtually had been all very different had been a great success. Similarly, the Annual Town Meeting had been successful with many compliments received in the way it had been held

and the information provided. The monthly Farmers' Markets had also continued and managed and had received many visitors.

The Town Mayor attended a tree planting ceremony at Gostrey Meadow to replace a tree previously planted by past Mayor Paddy Blagden. The Mayor's two charities Space to Grow and the Hale Community Centre (now also organising Space to Breathe) had flourished, both providing support to those that have needed it most.

In response to the sad news of the death of HRH Prince Phillip, Duke of Edinburgh, the Mayor wrote a letter of condolence to Her Majesty The Queen, on behalf of the people of Farnham. The Mayor also attended a Service of Remembrance at Guildford Cathedral.

The Deputy Mayor had been a great support and attended a St George's Day Service at St George's Church in Badshot Lea.

The Mayor commented that it had been seven weeks since the last Council meeting and that lockdown restrictions were being lifted. Members had received information about future Council meetings and Working Groups and how they might operate.

The Mayor voiced her thanks and appreciation to councillors, staff and the residents of Farnham, many of whom had volunteered during the pandemic.

C166/20 Questions by Members

There were no questions by Members.

C167/20 Working Group Notes

C168/20 Tourism & Events Working Group

Cllr Earwaker introduced the notes of the Tourism & Events Working Group held on 23rd March 2021 at Appendix B. The Farmers' Market held on 25th April included non-essential merchandise as a result of changes to Government guidance although Covid restrictions were still in place. The date of the next Market would be 23rd May.

The Town Council working with Farnham Community Farm would hold the Sustainability Festival on May 23rd in Gostrey Meadow. Covid restrictions would be in place, similar to Music in the Meadow and residents would be asked to book a two-hour slot online.

The Antiques and Brocante Market held on West Street on April 25th was a great success. A Craft Makers Market would be held in West Street on 23rd May. Plans for the Music in the Meadow events were advanced and would take place from 30th May. Covid restrictions would be similar to 2020 and residents would be asked to book a socially distanced bubble online.

Cllr Earwaker advised of two new initiatives, makers space and vacant shop units. The Town Council held a meeting with Waverley Borough Council to discuss an outline proposal for co-worker craft space in Farnham. Discussions were at an early stage and the first action would be to identify a suitable location. The Town Council would be investigating a proposal to display local craft in empty shop windows. Discussions were also at an early stage.

The meeting held in March would be the last for Cllr Earwaker as Lead Member, he thanked the Mayor for her input to Council events over the past two years, to councillors, staff, volunteers and residents that had assisted with the organisation of the events.

There were no recommendations. The notes were received and accepted from Tourism & Events.

C169/20 **Strategy & Finance Working Group**

The Leader introduced the notes of the Strategy & Finance Working Group held on 20th April 2021 at Appendix C. The focus of the meeting had been the Annual Accounts and Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2020/21. These were considered later in the meeting under agenda item 8 (minute reference C165/20).

C169a/20

Cllr Neale referred to the statement of Dr David Brown that had been received at the beginning of the meeting. The statement highlighted the concerns of General Practitioners about changes to the boundaries of Frimley Health & Care Integrated Services. The Leader proposed that a meeting of the Infrastructure Planning Group (IPG) be convened to consider the issues and formulate the Town Council's response.

Cllr Merryweather declared he was Waverley's appointed Governor to the Royal Surrey County Hospital Trust and would abstain from the discussion on this matter.

**It was RESOLVED *nem com* with one abstention that:
Council delegate to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Infrastructure Planning Group the formulation of the Town Council's response.**

C169b/20

The Leader covered discussions at the Infrastructure Planning Group. The Programme Team would provide formal feedback to the Town Council's response to the OIP at a special meeting on 13th May at 4.00pm.

Cllr Beaman asked whether there had been any substantial objections to the Traffic Regulation Order, to ban of HGVs from the Town Centre, that would require a public enquiry. The Town Clerk advised there had been general support. A walk through had been planned to consider the potential signage. Hampshire County Council had had no objections and the police had confirmed they would look to ensure the signage was sufficient to enable the scheme to be self-enforcing as much as possible.

Cllr Cockburn's comments regarding the importance of Farnham's Conservation Area Management Plan (FCAMP) were clarified in the context of Waverley proposal for electric car chargers and cycle shelters. The latter were considered inappropriate in terms of design and location by Cllrs Cockburn, Hesse and Beaman.

Cllr Cockburn proposed a letter be written to Waverley requesting that proposals in the Conservation Area car parks be considered by the Town Council and FCAMP.

**It was RESOLVED *nem con* that,
The Town Clerk write a letter to Waverley Borough Council to object against the design and location of the cycle shelter in the Conservation Area and request further consultation to find something more suitable for Farnham.**

The Working Group had discussed the planters in the Town Centre. The Leader advised the Programme Team would be considering an exit strategy, but no decisions had been made.

C169c/20

Cllr Mirylees updated Council on the meeting of Younger Persons Task Group held on 12th March. Two young people from North Farnham that had engaged with Councillors regarding youth facilities they would like to see in the area, would be invited to attend a future meeting. The Task Group would be looking to develop a project plan at its next meeting to provide a clear focus for the forthcoming year.

C169d/20

The Leader reported on the Asset Task Group on behalf of Cllr Attfield. The refurbishment of the Central Car Park toilets is recommended to Council for approval. Cllr Mirylees asked for clarification on the scope of the works. Cllr Dunsmore who had reviewed the proposals confirmed the existing facilities fall short of the modern standards. The works would refurbish the wall and floor coverings, replace doors and sanitaryware, and improve the handwash facilities. The costs also include surveyor fees to manage the works.

**It was RESOLVED unanimously,
To proceed with the refurbishment of the Central Car Park toilets at a cost of £90,000.**

C169e/20

The Leader advised improvements to the play area in Gostrey Meadow were completed within existing budgets. Plans were received and reviewed from West Waddy Architects on proposals for the Hale Chapels. A future meeting of the Assets Task Group and Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group would consider the proposals in more detail. Officers were awaiting further scaled drawings from the Ridgeway School on the revised location of the Café. The West Street Cemetery Gates had been removed for refurbishment. New CCTV cameras had been installed at Gostrey Meadow and in South Street outside the Methodist Church.

Cllr Hesse enquired whether there had been any progress with discussions with the Bishops' Meadow Trustees about the provision of CCTV. The Town Clerk confirmed Officers had contacted the Trust and details of the Council's CCTV contractor shared. An offer to link to the Council's CCTV infrastructure at the Depot scheme had been made but the cost of new cameras would fall to the Trustees as it is private land. There had been no further approach to the Town Council since their discussion with the CCTV provider.

The Leader highlighted the discussions held on public and community assets. A paper would be produced summarising the Council's view on their future.

Cllr Attfield joined the meeting.

Cllr Hesse enquired why Tice's Meadow had not been considered suitable as a SANG. Cllr Merryweather confirmed the SANG potential of the site was under active investigation. Cllr Cockburn considered a wider discussion about SANG capacity would be helpful since unless additional SANG provision was identified, development with green space provision would get priority at Appeals and the Town would be vulnerable to speculative development. The Town Clerk advised the wider Government Policy of SANG provision could be raised with NALC and through Waverley the LGA.

It was agreed to refer SANG provision and the wider policy discussion to the Infrastructure Planning Group with a view to developing a collaborative approach with Waverley Borough Council and other Councils in the area, all of whom were affected by Government Policy.

C170/20 **Year End Accounts 2020-21**

The Leader introduced the report on the 2020/21 Outturn at Appendix D.

The Town Clerk confirmed the year end accounts were considered in detail at the Strategy & Finance Working Group held on 20th April.

Council noted it had been a difficult year, but the Council had ended the year in a positive position, largely because the Town Council does not rely on income that some other authorities do. The Council had offset the cost of lost income from events and sponsorship with a reduction in expenditure and increased grant income. The reported proposed allocating into earmarked reserves commitments made through the year that had not yet been implemented and had contributed to the surplus, including investment in programmes such as the toilet refurbishment.

The Town Clerk referred the finance reports considered at Strategy & Finance. The draft Report and Financial Statements for 2020/21 at Appendix F contained a list of the earmarked reserves and general reserves. The Council's current policy had been to keep up to six months' worth of operating expenditure as a general reserve. Strategy & Finance had agreed to review the level during the year but considered the current level appropriate under the current period of uncertainty. This was agreed by Council.

The Town Clerk introduced the Internal Auditor's Report at Appendix G. The Internal Auditor had confirmed the sign-off of the paperwork required by the External Auditor but had identified a 7p difference. This had been a transcribing error that had been corrected.

The Town Clerk introduced the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. Section I asked Council to confirm the accounts had been prepared in accordance with the law and proper practices and that Council had fulfilled its duties in respect of the South Street Trust. All boxes had been confirmed with yes, and Council confirmed its agreement.

Cllr Edmonds understood there would be a 'transparent statement' in the Financial Statements about the risk to the Council's money on deposit in that it was not covered by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. The Town Clerk confirmed this had been added to the report.

Councillors thanked the Town Clerk, Sarah Cross and Claire Connell for their hard work and preparation of the year-end accounts.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the:

- 1) 2020/21 Outturn at the end of a difficult year be welcomed;**
- 2) Annual Governance Statement (Section I of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return) be approved;**
- 3) Internal Auditor's report and officers' comments be agreed;**
- 4) Updated Asset Register be approved;**
- 5) Report and Financial Statements for 2020/21 be adopted for signature;**
- 6) Variances list for the Annual Return be agreed;**
- 7) Annual Governance and Accountability Return and associated papers be approved for signature and submission to the External Auditor.**
- 8) General and earmarked reserves be reviewed in the autumn.**

The notes were received and accepted from Strategy & Finance.

Cllr Ward left the meeting.

C171/20 Election to Working Groups 2021/22

A revised report on the election of Working Groups, Task Groups and Panels for 2021/22 at Appendix K was introduced by the Town Clerk. Council noted that Councillors had identified preferences for the Working Group for 2021/22 in accordance with Standing Order 15. The appointments were made as per Annex 1 to these minutes.

C172/20 Appointment of Working Group Lead Members

The Mayor proposed and it was agreed *nem con*, that Council be adjourned in order that each Working Group appoint its Lead Member to confirm the composition of Strategy & Finance Working Group.

Meeting of each Working Group were held in turn and the Lead Member were agreed as:

Community Enhancement Working Group: It was agreed that Cllr Dickson be appointed as Lead Member. (Proposed by Cllr Hesse, seconded by Cllr Mirylees and agreed *nem con*).

Tourism & Events Working Group: It was agreed that Cllr Evans be appointed as Lead Member. (Proposed by Cllr Mirylees, seconded by Cllr Martin and agreed *nem con*).

Cemeteries & Appeals Working Group: It was agreed that Cllr Cockburn be appointed as Lead Member. (Proposed by Cllr Attfield, seconded by Cllr Fraser and agreed *nem con*).

The election of the Lead Member of the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group would take place at the first meeting. Similarly, the Panels would appoint their Lead Members.

Cllr Dickson as Lead Member of The Community Enhancement Working Group would be added to the membership of the Strategy & Finance Working Group (shown at Annex 1 to these minutes).

C173/20 Appointment of Task Group and Panels

Council agreed Task Groups to be re-established for 2021/22 as there was still work to be done and the membership for each group was agreed as set out in Annex 2 to these minutes.

Members agreed to continue the work of the Trees and Hedgerow Task Group. It was agreed there were several relevant initiatives that could be included in its programme including tree planting, but it would be beneficial to revisit its terms of reference.

Two additional Groups were added:

- Riverside Sculpture Task Group (not yet met)
- Cultural Project Group (the project group first met on 27th April. The wider reference group had not yet met).

Council agreed that some of the work of the Wellbeing Task Group had been picked up by other groups and partner organisations including work on tackling loneliness with funding of £25k. The Town Clerk confirmed the work of the Task Group would be picked up by Strategy & Finance Working Group.

It was noted, in accordance with convention, the Mayor-designate would not be appointed to Task Groups as the Mayor could attend all Working Groups and Panels ex-officio.

C174/20 Appointment of Representatives to External Bodies 2021/22

A report on the Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies at Appendix L was introduced by the Town Clerk.

Councillors had identified preferences for being the Council's representative to External Bodies 2021/22. Some bodies received one nominee, some bodies received more than one nominee and other bodies received no nominees. A suggestion and nominees were also made for an additional outside body where representation was thought to be beneficial.

Following a discussion appointment were made and agreed as shown in Annex3 (attached to these minutes).

C175/20 Revised Farnham Design Statement

Cllr Cockburn introduced the revised Farnham Design Statement that updated the 2010 version. The document sits alongside The Farnham Area Conversation Management Plan and Farnham Neighbourhood Plan 2020. The photographs need further work but the proposal was for the text to be sent to Waverley Borough Council for review.

Sarah Wells would review the document to ensure it were fit for purpose. Cllr Cockburn clarified the document would be adopted by Waverley Borough Council and used as a material consideration. The Town Clerk advised Council would need to approve the document prior to its submission to Waverley.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) The Revised Farnham Design Statement be approved**
- 2) The Farnham Design Statement be submitted to Waverley Borough Council, the Local Planning Authority for review and adoption as a material consideration**

Cllr Fraser thanked Cllr Cockburn for preparing the document. Cllrs were asked to forward additional high quality photos of individual wards.

C176/20 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Edmonds introduced the minutes of the Planning & Consultative Group meetings held on 15 March, 29 March, 12 April and 26 April 2021 at Appendix N, O, P and Q.

The Town Clerk advised a letter had been sent to Waverley raising Council's concerns about the performance of its planning website that including download speed and accuracy of information. A request had for a meeting to continue the discussion had been received. Cllr Edmonds would attend the meeting with Officers and the relevant portfolio holder from WBC.

Cllr Edmonds highlighted the difficulty securing councillor representation from all Wards to provide a Town inclusive response to planning applications. It was a heavy burden for Ward Members and those unable to attend meetings are asked to send their comments to Officers. The misallocation of planning applications had been challenged and examples given

Cllr Edmonds thanked Cllr Fraser for his contribution and diligence.

Cllr Edmonds highlighted a recent application where Farnham Town Council's view had been different to Waverley Borough Council in respect of filming in Bourne Woods on a permanent basis. Cllr Edmonds considered that Farnham Town Council and others needed to be sensitive to the biodiversity implications of its decisions.

Cllr Cockburn highlighted the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan would provide some protection for two further years expiring in April 2022. This grace period provides that Waverley only needs demonstrate a three-year land supply. However, after April 2022 Farnham would be vulnerable to speculative development unless the Local Plan Part 2 was updated and a five-year housing land supply demonstrated.

Cllr MacLeod advised that the problem with a five-year land supply did not rest with the Borough Council who were approving applications but with developers who were not then building houses.

C177/20 Calendar of Meeting Dates 2021/22

The Calendar of Meeting Dates for 2021/22 was received and noted.

C178/20 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

The Town Clerk reported a small fire occurred at the Greenhouses at the weekend. There was an ongoing investigation it appeared to be a fault at the input supply. Steps had been taken to secure additional orders of plants damaged by the smoke. Officers were in touch with the Council's insurers and loss adjustor and it was expected to have a negative impact on Farnham in Bloom. The Mayor asked for the Council's sadness to be forwarded to staff impacted by the fire.

C179/20 Reports from Other Councils

There were no updates received.

C180/20 Reports from Outside Bodies

The Mayor had attended a meeting of the Maltings Management Committee.

Cllr Edmonds reported there had been an airspace change process undertaken and areas of the Borough that had not previously experienced aircraft noise from Farnborough Airport may now do so. The change came into effect on 27th February 2020 and a post implementation review would be conducted.

C181/20 Date of Next Meeting

It was noted the date of the next meeting the Annual Meeting and Mayor Making would be held on Thursday 20th May 2021 at 7pm.

It was planned that this meeting would be a physical meeting, held in accordance with any specific restrictions, in terms of number of attendees, that may apply at the time.

The Town Clerk advised it was important to ensure the meetings were quorate. Standing Orders determine that the Farnham quorum is 50% plus 1. Cllr MacLeod asked if there

would be plans to temporarily suspend that Standing Order and operate with the legal requirement of one third i.e. 6 and this could be taken on a meeting by meeting basis.

Cllr Attfield proposed, and Cllr Neale seconded that the legal quorum of one third i.e. 6 Members be applied for the next meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed alternative premises were being investigated to facilitate meetings in public whilst maintaining social distancing rules and Government guidance.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

For the next meeting, the legal quorum be applied.

The same question would be made at the next meeting.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 10.35 pm.

Mayor

Date