



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 20th October, 2022

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Councillors

Councillor Alan Earwaker (Mayor)
Councillor David Attfield
Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Carole Cockburn
Councillor Sally Dickson
Councillor Pat Evans
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

Cllrs Michaela Wicks, Roger Blishen and Paula Dunsmore

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager), Rachel Aves./

There were 3 members of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd Jacqueline Drake-Smith of St Peter's Church, Wrecclesham.

C53/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Blishen, Dunsmore and Wicks.

C54/22 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest other than those of double and triple-hatted councillors.

C55/22 **Minutes**

The minutes of the Farnham Town Council meeting held on 4th August 2022 at Appendix A were agreed.

The meeting scheduled for September had been cancelled in view of the mourning period following the death of the Monarch.

C56/22 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

There were no questions or statements from the public.

C57/22 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Town Mayor was pleased to announce the success of Farnham in Bloom, where the Town Council had won Gold at the Britain in Bloom finals for the third successive entry. He said this was a testament to the hard work of the staff, volunteers, sponsors and councillors and congratulated everyone involved. He also noted that only four of the eight towns in the Large Town category had won gold and said he was incredibly proud.

The last month had been busy following the death of Her Majesty the Queen and the proclamation of the King. The Mayor advised that condolences had been sent to the Royal Family from the Town Council and that the Books of Remembrance were being sent to the Surrey history Centre.

The Mayor advised that tickets were still available for the annual Venison Dinner on 10 November.

It was noted that Remembrance Sunday would be on 13 November; the procession would take place from Castle Street to Gostrey Meadow and there would be no civic church service with the whole Remembrance at the War Memorial

The Mayor said that he had commissioned Susie Lidstone to provide the artwork for his annual Christmas card and Susie joined him to present the drawing she had produced, which showed St Andrew's Church and school with a family approaching the entrance, illustrating Farnham as a welcoming place for everyone.

C58/22 **Questions by Members**

There were no questions from Members.

C59/22 **Working Group Notes**

i) Tourism and Events held on 12th October 2022 Appendix B

Cllr Mirylees introduced the meetings of the Tourism and Events meeting that took place on 12th October at Appendix B to the agenda.

The *Discover Farnham* app commissioned through the Welcome Back fund was live and officers had met with Simon Aeppli of the University for the Creative Arts who designed a Ghost Trail for the app, which flags all the history in Farnham. This was being launched on 29 October and other trails already installed include trees, and craft.

Cllr Mirylees also mentioned that lots of arts and crafts information for Craft month and World Craft Town was available through the site www.farnhamcrafttown.com.

It was noted that the Literary Festival in 2023 was going ahead but the Gin Festival 2022 had been cancelled as it was due to take place during the period of National Mourning for the Queen.

Cllr Mirylees concluded by advising that in 2023, there were plans for a Festival of Light as part of Craft Month and Christmas events.

Cllr Merryweather spoke about Pierrepont Farm brewery, which is outside of Farnham but very close by and of interest to the town, and the cancelling of the lease by the Countryside Regeneration Trust in favour of another new brewery. He proposed a motion that the Town Council express concern and offer support to Frensham Parish Council to ensure a positive outcome for the existing brewery who had done so much to create a successful business on site. The proposal was **SECONDED** by Cllr Cockburn.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* to express concern and offer support to Frensham Parish Council to ensure a positive outcome for Craft Brews at Pierrepont Farm.

ii) Strategy and Finance held on 14th October 2022

Cllr Evans introduced the notes of the Strategy and Finance Working Group notes from 14th October at Appendix C to the agenda.

- a) The Finance Report had been discussed in detail. Cllr Evans recommended the unqualified external audit for 2021/22 for approval by Council.

It was RESOLVED *unanimously* to welcome the External Auditor's 2021/22 report.

- b) Council considered the detail of the latest Trial Balance and Budget Comparisons, the current reserves level, and the Income and Expenditure to 30th September by both account code and Committee which were on target for this time of year despite the cancellation of the Gin Festival as a result of the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. Cllr Evans explained that the Strategy and Finance Working Group had agreed to review the Christmas Light contract in 2023 and an increased provision for energy costs would be made in the coming budget as a result of the challenges being faced.

The Statement of Investments was noted, as was the discussion at Strategy and Finance regarding the fact that HSBC was no longer offering a relationship manager and that a banking review would be undertaken.

The Aged Debtors list had been reviewed with potentially three invoices totalling £350 which may need to be written down. Council was reminded the BACS and payment files were available for inspection by councillors. It was noted that the Council's financial software (Rialtas Business Systems) had been bought by Harris Computer Incorporation and there were no expected difficulties as a result of the change.

Cllr Evans congratulated officers on the way they handle the financial affairs.

- c) The Strategy and Finance Working Group had reviewed a grant application from 40 Degreez to support youth outreach work.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that a grant of £2,500 be provided for the two roles in the application and that this be reviewed after 6 months.

It was noted a grant of £500 had been agreed at the September meeting for the Pilgrim Marathon that took place in September

- d) The Town Clerk added that there were some financial recommendations to take from the September meeting.

It was RESOLVED nem con that:

- i) **Standing Orders (contracts) be waived for specialist tree work in West Street Cemetery by Cedardale at a cost of £3,885;**
- ii) **A tree carver be commissioned to create a suitable carving on the remaining part of the tree; and**
- iii) **A budget of £10,000 be agreed to undertake urgent works to trees following the tree survey with the final decision on contractors delegated to the Town Clerk once the final quotation had been received.**

- e) Cllr Beaman provided an update on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme, confirming that the Town Council's submission had been sent to Surrey CC as agreed at the last Council. Council was disappointed to note that the Board had not met since June and that the latest meeting had been deferred until December 16th.

- f) Co-option of Councillor for Wrecclesham and Rowledge
Council considered the arrangements for the co-option of a councillor following the resignation of Cllr Edmonds and **RESOLVED nem con to endorse the process outlined.**

- g) Infrastructure Planning Group
It was noted that Locality had not yet responded to further enquiries regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and that a positive meeting had taken place between the Town Council and Waverley officers regarding the Design Statement and the Neighbourhood Plan.

Cllr Cockburn sad that some progress had been made on the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, including reviewing other Neighbourhood Plans such as Brixworth which was updated without a referendum.

Council noted Waverley Borough Council had now sent a new set of amendments to the Farnham Design Statement (more than 8 months since the update had been sent to them). The changes were minor and would be updated speedily.

- h) Cllr Beaman emphasised that the comments had been received following the positive meeting the Town Clerk had described and that a follow up meeting was being arranged with the Joint Head of Waverley and Guildford, at which the Neighbourhood Plan would also be discussed.

Young people Task Group

- i) Since the meeting of the Strategy and Finance Working Group, the Young People Task Group had met. Cllr Mirylees updated that the youth leader from Godalming had attended to update on their work where he had been doing brilliant work with young people. It was noted that this youth worker would be visiting 40 Degreez to provide some guidance and had offered a visit to Godalming to see the work happening there.

The Town Clerk paid credit to Godalming Town Council for their evolving youth work and noted that they had a three-year project which had seen an agreed

increase in precept of £10 per band D to facilitate this work. It was noted that youth work in Farnham would be discussed at the upcoming Strategy Day.

j) Riverside Sculpture Task Group

Cllr Cockburn said she had visited the community engagement event the previous week and that it had been very popular.

k) Museum Task Group

The minutes of the last meeting were noted, as was the submission by Waverley of an application to the MEND scheme, a decision for which was expected in March 2023. The FTC pledge included an earmarked reserve of £15,000 for fitting out the inside of the museum after the MEND project was concluded.

l) HR Panel

The Town Clerk had commission the agreed grading review and once completed this would be considered by the HR Panel.

m) Coronation Task Group

Council noted the Coronation of King Charles III would take place on 6th May 2023 **It was RESOLVED *nem con* Group to create a Coronation Task Group, consisting of 5 members from Strategy and Finance and Tourism and Events, Cllrs Mirylees, Hesse, Cockburn, Evans and Martin.** It was noted that the Task Group would report to the Strategy and Finance Working Group.

Cllr Evans advised that the Farnham Society had written to the Town Council offering to purchase a beacon brazier for such ceremonial and civic events, ideally one that would be locally manufactured.

n) Contracts and Assets

Council noted the West Street Cemetery gates were to be completed in early November and the new Town Hall boiler had been installed. Council also noted the Council had experienced some significant IT issues as a result of the failure of an uninterruptable powers supply following a power surge and options for improved resilience were being investigated.

o) **Civility & Respect Pledge**

Following the adoption of the new Code of Conduct, Council considered the proposal to adopt the new Civility & Respect Pledge which had been developed by the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks. There was concern that the pledge may stifle debate or humour in the chamber but the Town Clerk advised it reinforced the principles already in the FTC councillor staff policies and was a positive statement of the commitment of the Council **It was RESOLVED *unanimously* that the Civility & Respect pledge be signed and adopted.**

p) Council **RESOLVED *nem con* that Peter Greenyer and Mrs Emily Joyce (current treasurer) be appointed by Farnham Town Council to the Farnham Institute Charity to serve a new four year term (2022-2026) as Trustees.**

iii) **Community Enhancement**

Council noted an informal discussion took place on 7th September as the meeting was not quorate

iv) Cemeteries & Appeals

Cllr Cockburn reported that the Group had met in West Street Cemetery on 29th September to review the cemetery and observe tree works and commented that the cemetery was looking very good and credited the team.

C60/22 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Fraser reported on the meetings held on 15th August, 5th and 26th September and 3rd and 17th October. He advised there had been a very high number of applications to review - a total of 166.

He raised the following as items of note from the various meetings:

- Bells solicitors in the Town Centre - application to convert to 7 flats
- Hookstyle residential application alongside the railway
- Application to fell trees - which should be replaced with similar trees
- Hawthorns residential development application which was not allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan

It was noted that there was a lack of information on appeals being sent to town and parish councils. which was important due to the amount of enquiries the parish and town councils received from the public.

C61/22 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

There were no actions to report other than those noted elsewhere in the minutes.

C62/22 Reports from Other Councils

- i. Cllr Fraser gave an update on matters relating to Waverley Borough Council air quality actions. A meeting was held to discuss the Air Quality Management Plan and Cllr Fraser was concerned about the length of time it had taken to call the meeting and how poorly it was conducted in his opinion. He expressed concern about the amount of time taken to take action on the matter. Cllr Beaman asked if the Cllr Fraser could encourage Waverley Borough Council to hold a meeting related to Farnham only.
- ii. Cllr MacLeod gave an update from Surrey County Council and the scheme introduced to support those on low incomes related to the cost of living crisis. It was noted that Surrey were setting up welfare hubs that people could visit to get support and advice. Cllr MacLeod also had two trees to donate and it was noted that these would be donated to the Town Council. Cllr MacLeod also advised on the Surrey Healthy Streets initiative had also being launched and was related to Surrey Council being more involved in highway design.
- iii. Cllr Cockburn expressed disappointment, shared by other councillors, that the Surrey Local Committees had been disbanded, especially as it had had success around Rowledge and other areas, as a result of petitions to the committee. Cllr MacLeod agreed with Cllr Cockburn and advised that petitions could be submitted, but that they are sent to Select Committee that meets in Reigate. He added that he was looking at setting up a version of Local Committee with support from within Waverley, although recognised that this would not be a full substitute.
- iv. Cllr Neale added that a national group had been looking at banking hubs and that local initiatives should align with them. The Town Clerk advised that local residents has taken an initiative to secure one in Farnham led by Mrs Mary Ambler who had been in touch with the local MP and local councils.

- v. Cllr Martin said that "Your Fund Surrey" had not been accessed by many groups in Surrey, but some large amounts of funding were going to areas such as Chobham. It was noted that a new funding stream as part of "Your Fund Surrey" was being launched, with £50k going to each of the SCC councillors, enabling them to support grass roots initiatives.

C63/22 Reports from Outside Bodies

- i) Cllr Cockburn updated Council on the Loneliness Task Group. The project, which was set up post-Covid, was looking at ways to improve loneliness and one way thought of was accessible walks. Cllr Cockburn thought there was an opportunity to link with the *Discover Farnham* app.
- ii) Cllr Neale gave an update on the following:
- Public art trust - very active and had recently produced a new publication.
 - New Ashgate gallery - building was leased by Waverley and some roofing work was required which Cllr Neale was trying to assist with.
 - Farnham Maltings - had appointed a new CEO, Peter Glanville who would take up post in January.

C64/22 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 15th December at 7.00pm.

C65/22 Exclusion of the Press and Public

The resolution to exclude the press and public was AGREED in view of the contractual matters under discussion which were commercially confidential.

C66/22 Hale Chapels Community Garden

The Town Clerk advised that the design for the garden had been tendered nationally and that three bids had been received. The range of quotations was substantial. Officers had done an initial analysis of the bids.

It was **RESOLVED unanimously**

- i) that the Town Council should interview the lowest two contractors to discuss their bids, their sub-contractors and their references.**
- ii) The Town Clerk in consultation with the Assets Task Group should determine the successful contractor in conjunction with the Assets Task Group after due diligence had taken place at a cost not exceeding the middle contractor's quotation.**

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.02 pm

Chairman

Date