



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 16th March, 2023

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Councillors

Councillor Alan Earwaker (Mayor)
Councillor Michaela Wicks (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor David Attfield
Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Carole Cockburn
Councillor Sally Dickson
Councillor Pat Evans
Councillor Tony Fairclough
Councillor Andy MacLeod
Councillor Michaela Martin
Councillor Mark Merryweather
Councillor Kika Mirylees
Councillor George Murray
Councillor John Neale
Councillor John Ward

Apologies for absence

Paula Dunsmore, John "Scotty" Fraser and George Hesse

Officers Presents:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk
Lisa Tremeer, Communities and Administration Manager
Jenny De Quervain, Planning & Civic Administrator

There were 5 members of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd Dr Michael Hopkins, of the Spire Church. At the start of the meeting the Mayor paid tribute to Janet Maines MBE who has passed away saying she was an immense contributor to the life of Farnham as Mayoress to Victor Duckett in 1999/2000, as a town, borough and county councillor, and as a leading supporter of Hale Community Centre and 40 Degreez. The Mayor led a minute's silence in her memory.

C95/22 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllrs Dunsmore, Fraser, Hesse and Ward.

C96/22 **Disclosures of Interest**

Cllr Evans and the Town Clerk disclosed an interest in Agenda item 7 I) as members of the Local Government Pension Scheme.

C97/22 **Minutes**

The minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 26th January 2023 were agreed.

C98/22 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

Mr David Wylde spoke to Council about the proposed new St James Conservation Area in the Eastern part of Farnham from Bear Lane to the Fire Station. A small committee had been formed to progress this idea, including Mr Michael Blower and Mr Malcolm Lelliott, and it was hoped the Town Council would be able to endorse the proposal in due course. Mr Wylde circulated a briefing note that had been prepared by the group and advised that it would be presented to Waverley Borough Council.

The Town Clerk advised that when the initial proposal was drafted, it would be considered by the Conservation Areas Task Group and go via the Strategy & Finance Working Group for consideration by Council.

C99/22 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor announced he had been pleased to host the Commonwealth flag raising ceremony on Monday which had a focus on the contribution of young people. He was also looking forward to special visit by HRH Prince Edward, the new Duke of Edinburgh who would be planting the 70th tree in the Jubilee Walk at Farnham Riverside and was carrying out an informal visit to meet many of Farnham's community organisations including Space2grow and Tice's Meadow Bird Group.

The Mayor also advised of the unveiling of *A Hand's Turn*, the new interactive sculpture on Longbridge which had been crafted at a number of community workshops.

The Mayor invited everyone to attend the Annual Town Meeting of electors on 23rd March in the Barley Room of the Maltings.

In conclusion, the Mayor wished Robin Cooper of the Outside Workforce congratulations on his formal retirement after 26 years with Farnham Town Council but was pleased he would continue to work two days a week for the foreseeable future.

C100/22 **Questions by Members**

There were no Questions from Members.

C101/22 **Working Group Notes**

I) Strategy & Finance Working Group

- i) Cllr Evans introduced the notes of the Strategy & Finance Working group meeting held on 7th March at Appendix B to the agenda. Council noted the expected outturn for the end of the financial year, the latest position on sponsorship and received an update on the Council's Complaint to the Financial Ombudsman re HSBC. Cllr Evans advised that the Working group had considered the detail of the latest Actuarial Valuation for the Pension Scheme which would see the Employer's rate increase from 14.2% to 16.9%. Initially Surrey CC had placed the Town Council into a pooled pot which was at a higher rate, but Council agreed to a recommendation to maintain the current position outside the pool noting it was 132% funded against the pooled funded rate of 116%.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that FTC remains outside the Town and Parish Council Pension Pool for the next three years.

- ii) Council noted that the Hoppa had requested the release of a pledge held for a new Electric Vehicle and **it was RESOLVED *nem con* that that FTC release the £20,000 held in earmarked reserves for HOPPA to purchase a new electric vehicle.**
- iii) Council received proposals for policy updates considered by the Strategy & Finance Working Group and agreed with the suggested amendments.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the following updated policies be adopted:

- 1. Standing Orders**
- 2. Financial Regulations**
- 3. Scheme of Delegation**
- 4. Member Officer Protocol.**

- iv) Council noted the updates on the work of the Task Groups that report to Strategy & Finance including the Riverside Sculpture Task Group, the Coronation Task Group, the Younger People Task Group, the Community Infrastructure Task Group and the Conservation areas Task Group. After discussion, the following recommendations were agreed.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that

- 1) Officers**
 - a) **progress work to restore the Farnham Flame and seek confirmation of costings;**
 - b) **investigate defining character areas within the Conservation Area in conjunction with the Local Planning Authority (LPA).**
- 2) Council**
 - a) **supports the work that the Conservation Area Task Group has been pursuing to prepare a submission to the LPA on the Article 4 Direction and the Regulation 7 Direction;**
 - b) **endorses bringing together the relevant estate/property agents so that views can be exchanged regarding how all parties can work collaboratively to remove banners and boards and avoid the detrimental effects on the visual amenity of the Conservation Area; and**
 - c) **supports the initial work being carried out for a new St James Conservation Area**
- v) Cllr Cockburn provided an update on the Review of Local Plan Part I and its impact on the sites currently coming up for appeal. The lack of a five year land

supply meant that Farnham needed the expected change in Paragraph 14 of the national Planning Policy Framework to be implemented quickly. She also advised that the review of the AONB and its proposed extension was good news for Farnham as two sites designated in the Neighbourhood Plan were going forward for inclusion.

- vi) Cllr Beaman provided an update on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme and an update on the Crest Nicholson proposals for a replacement bridge on the Brightwells Scheme which were not satisfactory and a more appropriate and elegant solution was being sought which would not dominate Borelli Walk with the scale of the proposed ramp and its supporting Gabions.

Cllr Beaman reported on the positive meeting with Cllr Oliver and that there was a strong assurance that what happened in Farnham had to have the backing of the Town Council.

- vii) Council received an update on contracts and assets including the new Chapels' Garden in Hale Cemetery, the tender for the repair of the lift and other works in progress, the replacement photocopiers; and the need for new battery packs for grounds maintenance.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that

- 1) **the contract to repair the lift be awarded to Liftsy, subject to satisfactory reference checks and an agreed payment profile at a cost of £26,920 with the costs met from the Town Hall earmarked reserve; and**
- 2) **FTC purchase 2 backpack batteries plus chargers with a cost of no more than £2,350.**

- viii) Council noted the key date for the retirement of councillors was 9th May and dates for induction of the new Council, the Annual Town Meeting on 18th May and the first meeting and appointment of Working Groups on 25th May. It was recommended that the meeting scheduled for 26th June, which was very close to the May Council, should be kept as a reserve date.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Council Meeting scheduled for 22nd June would be changed to a 'reserve meeting' and only take place if required.

- ix) Council noted the retirement of Achim Hütten, Oberbürgermeister of Farnham's twin town Andernach after three decades of service and recorded its appreciation for his leadership in supporting the friendship between the two communities.

3) Tourism & Events Working Group

Cllr Mirylees advised Council that the second Literary Festival had been a great success with a lot of diverse things incorporated including films, monologues and opera excerpts as well as great author events. She passed on her enormous thanks and gratitude to the volunteers and staff including Sue Keogh and Oliver Cluskey for their contribution.

C102/22 **Planning and Licensing Applications**

Cllr Martin introduced the notes of the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group meetings held on the 6th and 20th February, and 6th March at Appendices C,D and E. She said there had been over 100 applications and one of particular concern was the proposal for development at the Woodland Cemetery site in Hale, which has been allocated as SANG land in the Neighbourhood Plan. There also remained significant concern for the proposed 400 dwellings on green fields in Badshot Lea and elsewhere that were not allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan.

C103/22 **Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation**

The Town Clerk advised that the actions had been reported through the Working Groups.

C104/22 **Reports from Other Councils**

- 1) Cllr MacLeod advised that the Surrey County Council Select Committee on the Environment was undertaking a review of Waste and recycling and that there was also a review of bus policies underway. Cllr Beaman said there had been an avalanche of responses from the people of Farnham to the Select Committee in particular on the 65 bus proposal which was set to be reduced. As the Blackwater Valley was a priority area including Farnham, this should be improvements rather than reductions.
- 2) Cllr Martin advised of changes to the Your Fund Surrey with £50,000 now available via each divisional councillor for smaller community projects running up to 2025.

C105/22 **Reports from Outside Bodies**

Cllr Cockburn reported on the Connectivity meeting held recently where Libby Ralph did a presentation on connecting areas to enable species to breed and move over a wider area and stressed the importance of maintaining corridors for wildlife.

C106/22 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 27th April at 7pm.

C107/22 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

On a proposal by the Mayor, Council **RESOLVED** to exclude members of the press and public in view of the proposals being discussed which were confidential until published by Surrey County Council.

C108/22 **Confidential matters arising from discussions of the Working Group notes.**

Farnham Infrastructure Programme.

Council discussed the emerging proposals for the Town Centre options following the consultation undertaken by Surrey County Council. Council was supportive of option B but did not wish to see traffic signals at the junction of South Street and Union Road, and considered that a bus lane was not justified in South Street given the small number of buses. There were concerns over potential cycle lanes going against traffic particularly if this meant conflict between cycles and cars or cycles and pedestrians. There were a number of other points discussed on the range of options which would be recorded in a briefing note and be

presented by Cllr Beaman to the next meeting of the Farnham Infrastructure Board and circulated to Council in due course.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.18 pm

Chairman

Date