



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 26th October, 2023

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Councillors

Councillor Alan Earwaker (Mayor)
Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Mat Brown
Councillor Sally Dickson
Councillor Tony Fairclough
Councillor George Hesse
Councillor Chris Jackman
Councillor Andrew Laughton
Councillor Michaela Martin
Councillor Brodie Mauluka
Councillor Kika Mirylees
Councillor George Murray
Councillor John Ward
Councillor Graham White
Councillor Tim Woodhouse

Apologies for absence

Mark Merryweather

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)
Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager)

There were 3 members of the public present and 1 member of the press in attendance (via zoom).

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd Sandy Clarke, Vicar of the Bourne.

C65/23 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Merryweather.

C66/23 Disclosures of Interest

Cllr Fairclough declared a pecuniary interest as Waverley Portfolio for Brightwells in relation to agenda item 7 iii.

C67/23 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14th September were agreed.

C68/23 Questions and Statements by the Public

Mr Andrew Walker, of the Farnham Croquet Club made a presentation on the concept of a community sports hub on Gostrey Meadow on the land around where the bowling green used to be.

In response, the Mayor said the suggestions would be included in the thinking about Gostrey Meadow by the Assets Task Group and discussed by Council in due course once the response to the pre-planning consultation advice had been received from Waverley. He also advised that part of the area identified had been rewilded with a dead hedge and wildflower planting, to make a positive and beneficial impact for pollinators and biodiversity.

C69/23 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor reported that Craft month was progressing well with over 100 events taking place, forty of which were free to attend. He hoped to attend as many as possible.

The Mayor advised that the Venison Dinner was taking place on 10th November in the Bush Hotel with tickets still available.

The Mayor said that plans for the Remembrance procession and services on 12th November were well underway and encourage people to attend.

The Mayor was delighted to announce the success of Farnham in South and South East in Bloom awards in 2023 with five best in Category and 9 golds. He was also pleased to thank all the community winners at the local awards ceremony held at the Squires Garden Centre in Badshot Lea.

C70/23 Questions by Members

Cllr Dickson asked the following Question in accordance with Standing Order 9.

“I would like to welcome the start of the new academic year and welcome the return of UCA students who add joy, colour and vitality to our community.

In the light of this, please could you give an update on the plans and timeline for the new Farnham Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, could you give an update on conversations with UCA and plans for much needed expansion of student accommodation.”

The Mayor replied that a meeting had been arranged with local community groups for November 23rd when the approach to the Neighbourhood Plan Update/Review and next steps would be considered.

He also reported that a meeting between some of the senior management team of UCA and the Lead Members of FTC Working Groups and the Town Clerk was taking place in mid

November. He further advised, noting that the UCA would be a key stakeholder in the review of the Neighbourhood Plan, that FTC would expect to engage with UCA specifically on student accommodation needs as part of that review.

C71/23 **Environment Working Group**

Cllr Brown introduced the Notes of the Environment Working Group at Appendix B to the agenda. The Working group had received a presentation from Dr John Lewis on Plastic Free Farnham and work done by officers to date in reducing plastic use was noted.

There had also been an excellent presentation by Carolyn McKenzie, the Director of Environment at Surrey County Council who had mentioned how well Farnham had been doing in addressing climate issues. The Working Group had reviewed two 'mind maps' which set out activities undertaken so far and where further progress could be made.

On a proposal to Council **it was RESOLVED *nem con* that**

- 1) A Town Climate Action plan be prepared**
- 2) A Task Group for Climate Change be appointed.**

It was agreed that Cllrs Brown, Hesse, White and Woodhouse form the core members and noted that external participants would be included as required.

Cllr White reported that he had had a meeting with Jen Smallwood of Carbon Zero Guildford about the idea of a climate change network and other matters. These would be discussed at the Task Group.

ii) Cllr Brown advised the Working Group had received a report on parks and open spaces and had made a recommendation to Council that two tree stumps and a log be carved with suitable environmental images. The Business and Facilities Manager advised Council that the cost for removing the trees and stumps would cost in the region of £5,000 and, after discussion, **it was RESOLVED (with one abstention) that tree carvings in West Street Cemetery and Gostrey Meadow be undertaken at a cost of no more than £8,000, with the costs split between the Gostrey Meadow and Cemeteries budgets.**

iii) Cllr Brown reported that he had attended the South and South East in Bloom Awards ceremony which had been excellent. Farnham had been up against a lot of competition but performed brilliantly with awards for biodiversity climate change and sustainability as well as the nine golds and five best in category awards. Council noted the revamped Community Group and ideas for 2024 which were emerging. Council also noted the work programme for the cemeteries and that the annual invoices for allotments were being sent.

iv) In terms of Street furniture, Cllr Brown advised of the scheme for vinyl wrapping to prolong the life of the bus stops. Cllr Dickson reported that the litter bins in Alma Lane were not closed in and were emptied by foxes. It was agreed to raise this with Waverley Borough Council. Council noted the problem with litter bins in general and that there were many occasions when the barrow man was not to be found in town. After discussion on the importance of this service which Farnham Town Council had previously indicated an interest in taking on it was proposed by Cllr Woodhouse, Seconded by Cllr Dickson and **RESOLVED unanimously that Farnham Town Council bids to take on the barrow-man service under contract from Waverley.**

v) Council noted the proposed new nominations for the Notable Names of Farnham wall and on the recommendation of the Working Group **it was RESOLVED unanimously that the following names be added: Author Edgar Austin Mittelholzer; UN land**

mine champion and former Mayor of Farnham Brigadier Paddy Blagden CBE; founders of the Rural Life Living Museum Madge and Henry Jackson MBE; and distinguished illustrator (including Lord of the Rings and Narnia), Pauline Baynes.

vi) Cllr White noted that over recent years, Farnham Town Council had introduced sustainable processes in many of its activities from management of its green spaces, planting perennial flowers and pollinating plants, grant aiding the electric Hopper Bus Service and an introductory financial support scheme for sustainable community and environmental initiatives. there was much more to do and he said now was the time to promote Farnham Town Council's sustainability credentials and publish an Action Plan for the future and Help constituents understand the urgent need for a sustainable Farnham.

Cllr White advised that he had been invited by the Chair (Cllr Steve Williams of Godalming) to join the WBC Climate Change Working Group which involves many of the parties referred to in the recent Environment Working Group. **It was RESOLVED that Cllr White be the FTC nominated representative to the Waverley Climate Change Working Group with Cllr Hesse as reserve.**

a **Community Working Group**

Cllr Mirylees introduced the Notes of the Community Working Group held on 11th October, attached at Appendix C.

1 Events

- i) Council noted that the Music in the Meadow format would continue in 2024 and a greater variety of stalls was being sought for the West Street markets. Cllr Mirylees advised the Gin and Fizz Festival in Badshot Lea had worked well on a limited level and the Food Festival had been very successful. It was suggested that a review of the flow of people in the market could be considered to ease congestion. Council also noted that stallholders were encouraged to use compostable plates, cups, glasses and utensils.
- ii) Council noted the Craft Month was progressing well and a residency for Irish glassmaker Fiona Byrne was being finalised, with support from the South Street Trust.
- iii) Cllr Mirylees advised two keynote names had been secured for the 2024 Literary Festival subject to other commitments, and the programme was shaping up well.
- iv) Council noted that the BID team was positive about the outcome of the vote of businesses which would be announced on 1st November. Cllr Murray advised there were a number of new hospitality businesses in town which could potentially become involved as new sponsors of the events programme.
- v) Council noted there was no support for Snow Windows from Waverley this year but there would be free parking for one day in December. It was agreed that FTC would provide a link for businesses that would like to continue with the snow windows.

2 Younger People Task Group

- i) Cllr Jackman advised the next Younger People Task Group would be in mid November, and gave an update on things that had been happening. A meeting had taken place with Norma Corkish about future direction of support for young

people through the Task Group. It was noted there was no single database of activities across the town that are taking place in schools, youth centres and uniformed groups. The next Task Group would look at whether an umbrella organisation could keep this information in one place.

- ii) One of the main issues for all groups is one of funding. The Hale Community Centre had a couple of years of lottery funding left. Cllr Jackman advised options for a new community lottery are being explored and options would be discussed further at the next Task Group.
 - iii) Cllr Jackman updated Council on the mentoring programme at Heath End School led by the Revd Alan Crawley. It had positively helped 22 young people in last year and consideration was needed on continuing the initiative when Alan and Lesley Crawley retired in March.
 - iv) Cllr Jackman had attended the Sandy Hill Partnership meeting with representatives from a range of statutory and community organisations. Their focus was on getting Sandy Hill and the wider community better connected.
 - v) Ward members were asked to contact young people groups operating within their wards to get an understanding of what was taking place and their needs.
 - vi) Cllr White thanked Cllr Jackman for his report and advised council of the NALC briefing event on 'Empowering young voices in your community' which several councillors had attended and commended the recording to Council.
- 3 In response to concerns raised by Cllr Mirylees, Cllr Martin advised that the Police & Crime Commissioner and Borough Commander would be holding a Community Policing event in the Farnham Maltings on December 4th from 6.30 to 8.30 and encouraged everyone to attend.
- 4 Cllr Mirylees advised that the Community Grant scheme was open for applications, and Cllr Martin advised that each county councillor had a community grants pot of £50,000 to be spent over two years and she would welcome applications for younger people's projects. Cllr Dickson reported that the Farnham Youth choir was fundraising to support its participation as the UK choir in the World Choir games in New Zealand.

b Strategy & Resources Working Group

Cllr White introduced the Notes of the Strategy & Resources Working Group held on 17th October at Appendix D to the agenda. It had been a long meeting but this reflected the amount of business being considered.

- I Finances
 - i) Council noted the six-month finance reports had been considered in detail and in the Notes were answers to a series of questions particularly around income. Council noted some areas such as sponsorship and ticket sales were below expectation, others such as interest and dividends were significantly above budget as a result of rising interest rates. Overall expenditure was running at 46% whilst income (once the second tranche of the precept was included was at 95%.
 - ii) Council received the External Auditors unqualified audit and audit letter, at

Annex I to Appendix D, following the completion of the 2022-23 accounts and the Annual Governance and Accountability Return review by PKF Littlejohn LLP.

It was RESOLVED unanimously to welcome the Unqualified Audit for the 2022-23 Accounts.

- iii) The Working Group had considered a request for an additional grant for Space2grow towards its parenting classes. Exceptionally it was agreed to recommend that this grant be approved and that Space2grow be added to the list of organisations supported with a Service Level Agreement
It was RESOLVED unanimously that
 - a) **a grant of £2,000 be made to the Talking teens parenting classes with the funding to be met from the Younger People’s budget; and**
 - b) **Space2grow be added to the organisations in receipt of a Service Level Agreement grant for the work carried out by them.**
 - iv) Council noted the position with the Christmas Lights and that a tender for the 2014 scheme would take place in 2023. The scheme had lasted well but failing elements were renewed annually. Any additional investment for replacements this year would be separately identified for retention and could be used in other parts of the town. Council noted the outturn in 2022-23 was nearer to £80,000 and discussions were taking place to minimise any extra costs in 2023.
 - v) Council considered the issue of two Lombardy poplars which had had detailed resistograph tests and were shown to be over mature and failing. In order to minimise risk it was **RESOLVED unanimously that the remaining lombardy poplar in Gostrey Meadow and the lombardy poplar in Haren Gardens be removed and replacement trees be planted nearby.**
 - vi) Cllr White advised that the approved contractor (Jacksons) had visited Wrecclesham Community Centre prior to installing the new fence and advised that the end of the fence was tied into a retaining wall and required additional work which, with material increases, would increase the costs to over £7,000.
It was RESOLVED unanimously that the revised quotation by Jackson’s fencing be approved.
- 2 Farnham Infrastructure Programme
- i) Cllr Beaman provided an update on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme. He reported that it was now a very difficult stage with the Infrastructure Programme and he was preparing a briefing note ahead of the Strategy Day. There was now detailed design work being prepared for the Town Centre. A diagram had just been circulated on a confidential basis that would be considered by the Infrastructure Planning Group (IPG) as part of wider consultation on the detailed design. The Town Clerk advised that Cllr Beaman, he and Jenny de Quervain had met with the Programme officer to go through papers, already discussed with the County Councillors, ahead of the IPG meeting which would then feed into the December Council meeting. There were some elements that may require an earlier response, and it was suggested that, pending a report to Council, the joint leaders and Town Clerk

be delegated to respond to the latest proposals once it had been considered by the Infrastructure Planning Group, to avoid missing the opportunity to comment in-between Council meetings.

Council debated the merits of a response under the Scheme of Delegation versus calling an extraordinary council meeting. Cllr Beaman clarified that the intention was that all councillors would be invited to the IPG and would have the chance to comment on the detailed design proposals put forward by Surrey CC and there would also be a public consultation. Cllr Jackman felt that the debate at the previous council about street furniture in Castle Street showed there was clearly considerable interest in the detail. The Town Clerk advised that there were elements that could not be changed (ie those that were signed off at the September Farnham Infrastructure Board meeting) but there would be elements of detail where views were being sought. Cllr Martin advised that the options had been discussed previously by FTC and a preference made.

Cllr White suggested councillors review drawings and list their comments and questions ahead of an IPG meeting which could be collated by Cllr Beaman. Cllr Murray asked for the drawings to be circulated ahead of the IPG meeting, and the Town Clerk confirmed this would happen. Cllr Dickson raised concern over the bus stop outside the Queen's Head and Cllr Beaman advised there would be a meeting with the Stagecoach Commercial Director the following week and their views would be shared.

Cllr Jackman asked if there could be a briefing by Surrey County Councillors on what was proposed. Cllr Martin said that the County Councillors would be willing to do this. The Town Clerk suggested that the Surrey Lead Officer, Elaine Martin could be invited to explain the proposals and enable the town councillors to come to their own collective view on what was best for the town.

Cllr Woodhouse felt the Infrastructure Planning Group was the biggest thing to happen over the next few years and there needed to be collective visibility.

On a proposal by Cllr Beaman, it was **RESOLVED, with Cllr Dickson against and Cllr Martin abstaining, that a response on the detailed design should be sent by the Town Clerk in conjunction with the Mayor and co-leaders after a meeting of the Infrastructure Planning Group to which all councillors were invited.** The Town Clerk confirmed the Scheme of Delegation would not be used if time allowed for the draft response to be considered by Council first.

- 3 Infrastructure Planning Group
- i) Council noted the timescale and Scope for the Local Plan which had been set out in a report to the Waverley Executive and circulated to all councillors. A meeting had taken place between FTC and Waverley officers which amplified some of the programme. A Call for Sites was scheduled from November to January, and ideally this would be done in collaboration with the Town Council so the methodology and results could be incorporated in the Review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr White advised an initial meeting with community groups was set for 23rd November.

Cllr White also advised of the Waverley briefing for town and parish councils

on the Local Plan Review on 1st November.

- ii) Cllr Dickson asked that a regular slot be found, ideally in the evening, to discuss the Farnham Infrastructure Programme and Neighbourhood Plan. In response, Cllr White said this was a matter for the Strategy Workshop in terms of times of timekeeping, meeting times and volumes of meetings given the enthusiasm of councillors and to make things change and get the best results.
- iii) Council noted that the Conservation Areas Advisory Group had met and reviewed its terms of reference.
- iv) Cllr White advised that a comprehensive and robust response to the Farnborough Airspace Consultation drafted by Cllr Beaman had been submitted by the Town Clerk.

4 Brightwells Bridge

Having declared a pecuniary interest as a portfolio holder for Brightwells at Waverley Borough Council, Cllr Fairclough left the Chamber and did not take part in this item.

Cllr Beaman introduced the item suggesting that it may be helpful to clarify whether the Council's policy agreed by the last administration that FTC wished to see a 4m wide bridge as a pedestrian and cycle route was still the case.

Cllr Murray asked if cyclists were not allowed in Brightwells why did it need a 4m wide bridge. Cllr Hesse advised there was a cycle route to the East of the development. The Town Clerk added that there was a proposal to widen the Riverside path to accommodate cycles to Kimbers Lane and also along Borelli Walk and a cycle crossing was required and the modern standard for a shared surface was for 4m. Whilst the approved planning application was for a 2.5 bridge it was to be subject to a detailed application. Unfortunately, Crest had come very late with their detailed design, despite many Farnham representations at Brightwells Board meetings over several years for an early design. Surrey Highways had submitted an objection to the 2.5 bridge. Crest did not wish to submit a new application as it was outside the 'red line' of the development site and delay further the scheme. The concept of the new application going in parallel would help resolve the perception that the Environment Agency would object one way or the other, and overcome the impasse. Surrey officers said they would welcome it as they are concerned over the liability that would apply if there was an accident between cyclists and others with a bridge that was not to standard.

Cllr White said this was what was the best result for Farnham. One of the things that had been ignored was the bridge by 40Degreez that had been condemned by Surrey County Council and only remained open because of the representations by Farnham Town Council. There could be a situation where a 2.5m bridge would go in and at some point Waverley would have to submit a new bridge across to Dogflud Way. He suggested funds should be put together to build a 4m bridge and link the pathways.

Cllr Ward asked for clarification of the purpose of the recommendation and

whether FTC would build the bridge if permission was granted and whether the landowner had been approached; whether SCC had been approached; and what in parallel with Crest meant. In response, the Town Clerk confirmed that it was not the intention for FTC to build it; both WBC and SCC had been approached (and were currently evaluating the detailed costs of a 4m bridge); and the application would be in parallel with the conditions discharge application resubmitted by Crest after it had been refused. The reason for the recommendation from Strategy & Resources seeking permission to submit a planning application was to break the impasse that had appeared and deliver a bridge to the current standard.

Cllr Dickson felt that Waverley should be required to renew the bridge by 40Degreez and the two items should not be brought together.

Cllr Hesse commended the recommendation as a really good innovative proposal from Farnham Town Council to find a way forward with an alternative bridge scheme for others to pick up. The opportunity to make this happen was now or Farnham would be stuck with an inadequate bridge.

Cllr Ward said that Crest had a planning permission and therefore would be unlikely put any extra money into the bridge so someone else would be required to fund it Surrey, Waverley or FTC. It was unlikely the planning application would make Crest change their mind. If Surrey are doing the detailed costings and if it is a Surrey highways health and safety issue because of new standards then they should submit the application.

On a vote, the recommendation that FTC submits a planning application for a 4m bridge subject to the agreement of, and documentation provided by, Crest Nicholson to resolve the latest requirement and standards for a shared pedestrian and cycling bridge was LOST by 8 votes to 3 with 3 abstentions.

C72/23 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Laughton introduced the notes of the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group at Appendices E, F and G to the agenda. He said there had been a number of requests for solar pv panels which was a good sign. There was a speculative application for seven dwellings in Frensham Vale. There had also been a high number of tree applications which were welcome.

Cllr Laughton advised that the Inspector's decision for 56 homes at Monkton Lane was awaited.

C73/23 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

The Town Clerk advised there were no actions under the scheme of delegation to raise that had not already been reported.

C74/23 Reports from Other Councils

I Cllr Beaman reported, endorsed by other councillors, that the Surrey Connects on-demand bus service run by Hoppa was excellent and deserved much more publicity. He advised that the service ran 7am to 7pm weekdays and cost £2 but free for concessions.

- 2 Cllr Mirylees said that the Willmer House work was commencing and a digital investigation would take place in November.

C75/23 Reports from Outside Bodies

- 1 Cllr White reported that he had attended the 40 Degreez AGM with Cllr Mirylees. He advised that Waverley were considering repurposing the building and that 40 Degreez were looking to get a fundraiser on board and were seeking new volunteers. Cllr White said he felt this was something FTC should review to see how it could assist.
- 2 Cllr Hesse reported that the Farnborough Airspace Consultation was underway and that the Farnborough Noise Group had held a public meeting. At the meeting a number of statistics had been shared outlining that 40% of the flights were empty and that 95% of the destinations were served by commercial airlines. The proposal was to increase flights from 50,000 to 75, 000 but there were currently 33,000 flights but a doubling of weekend flights from 8,900 to 18,900 was proposed along with an increase in hours of operation to 8pm. It was noted that there were only seven flights in the last hour so an increase should not be required. Council noted that the proposed flightpath was narrower creating a bigger problem of noise and emissions for those under it.
- 3 Cllr Murray reported on the Plastic Free Farnham Group which was keen to promote the demise of single use plastics. He advised Council of the work being done in Frome and the success of the Green and Healthy Frome partnership that had won £1.7m funding from the National lottery to spend on climate change and wellbeing.
- 4 Cllr Jackman advised that he and Cllr Woodhouse had met with the Farnham Biodiversity Partnership who were keen to be part of the Neighbourhood Plan Review.

C76/23 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 14th December at 7pm.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.54 pm

Chairman

Date