



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

6.15 pm on Thursday 24th October, 2024

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Councillors

Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Mat Brown
Councillor Tony Fairclough
Councillor George Hesse
Councillor Chris Jackman
Councillor Andrew Laughton
Councillor Michaela Martin
Councillor Brodie Mauluka (Mayor)
Councillor Mark Merryweather
Councillor George Murray (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor Graham White
Councillor Tim Woodhouse

Apologies for absence

Alan Earwaker, Kika Mirylees and John Ward

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business & Facilities Manager)

There were 4 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 Wrecclesham.

C52/24 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Earwaker, Mirylees and Ward. Cllr Dickson attended the meeting remotely but did not vote.

C53/24 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest made.

C54/24 **Minutes**

C55/24 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

- 1) Mr Chris Butler of Castle Street raised the matter of speeding in Castle Street again. He had not received feedback on what had happened since his last question and was really disappointed with what the Farnham Infrastructure Programme (FIP) had come up with. He believed the raised table would make no difference as people would drive faster as they sped away. He had spoken with the police and they did not wish to enforce the matter nor want speed cameras. Mr Butler asked if Farnham Town Council would push the police and Surrey County Council to do more.

In response, the Leader thanked Mr Butler for raising the matter again and said the Council would continue to raise the issue in relevant forums. The Town Clerk added that the issue had been discussed in the Strategy & Resources Working Group in September which was minuted and reported back to the September Council meeting. Officers had raised the matter with the police at a joint council anti-social behaviour meeting and Cllr Beaman had raised the matter again at the September FIP Board meeting as well as with the relevant Surrey highways officers.

- 2) Anna Hollidge of the Bourne added her support to concerns that the 20MPH zone did not work and advised that the Mead Lane/Potters Gate required a Belisha beacon crossing before something terrible happened. She understood it was not an FTC issue but was the responsibility of Surrey CC but she hoped something could be done.

In response the Leader advised that there were a number of changes coming up that would hopefully help including new crossings by Coxbridge and from Potters Gate to the Borough funded by the Old Park Lane application. He understood the concerns raised which were complicated by the Farnham Infrastructure Programme but he would take it back to the Strategy & Resources Working Group for further discussion. Cllr Martin advised that Potters Gate would be a School Street with a focus on safety.

C56/24 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor opened by exclaiming what an amazing month it had been and relayed some of the events he had been privileged to take part in.

He was very proud to represent Farnham at the RHS Britain in Bloom Awards in Manchester and go with Iain McCready to collect the Gold award and best in category for the town and city centres. He said he had been almost in tears with joy and thanked everyone involved in this fantastic achievement.

Farnham also had the honour of a Royal visit welcoming Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Edinburgh GCVO to Hale. She was a wonderful visitor engaging with young people and old, and met several community groups discussing their work in the town.

The Mayor had attended the Lord Lieutenant's Awards ceremony for cadets at Sandhurst. It was great to see the achievements of so many young people and he invited councillors to encourage other young people to join.

The High Sheriff had recently visited the Town Hall to discuss how he could support the Mayor's two charities and he thought there are some good opportunities.

The Town Council had hosted a lovely ceremony to add Pauline Baynes, illustrator for JRR Tolkien and CS Lewis as the 33rd name on the Notable names of Farnham wall.

The Mayor advised he would be leaving Council early to celebrate the centenary of the Farnham Rotary Club which was an impressive achievement of service to Farnham.

C57/24 **Questions by Members**

Cllr Dickson had raised a question in accordance with Standing Order 9 advising that her constituents and members of the public attending the recent superlative food festival had expressed support for the incoming restrictions on speed and HGVs in the town centre and Upper Hale. She also understood SCC has been proactive in providing a camera car to monitor HGVs. Was it, she asked, the time to discuss a permanent camera and or request delegated powers from Surrey to fine moving vehicles in Farnham.

In response, the Town Clerk advised that legislation did not allow FTC to take on traffic enforcement of moving vehicles but had offered Surrey CC the possibility of incorporating such cameras alongside the FTC CCTV system. At this stage, they did not consider this was possible. Cllr White said the issue would be considered again at the Strategy & Finance Working Group.

C58/24 **Working Group Notes**

1 Environment

Cllr Brown introduced the Notes of the Environment Working group held on 25th September 2024. He said he had been 'gutted' he could not attend the Farnham in Bloom Awards. He gave special mention to Gemma Ball who had received the Mayor's Special Award for her longstanding contribution to In Bloom as Head of Badshot Lea Village Infants School and commended everyone who had won.

He echoed the Mayor's comments on the amazing result in the RHS Britain in Bloom awards with Farnham missing the overall title by the smallest of margins to Bath.

In terms of Green Flag entries for 2025, Cllr Brown advised that the Working Group would like to enter the Library Gardens if the new lease has been signed by Surrey as a new management plan would be beneficial. In response to a question the Business and Facilities Manager advised that Farnham had signed the contract for the lease and was awaiting Surrey handing over the keys.

Council noted the Working Group had suggested the Town Council undertook the work to calculate its carbon footprint and progress made and that this was in hand.

Cllr Jackman thanked the team for the graffiti removal in Badshot Lea.

Cllr Mauluka left at this point and handed over to the Deputy Mayor.

2 Community and Culture

Cllr Murray introduced the Notes of the Community and Culture Working Group held on 2nd October at Appendix C to the agenda.

Council noted the update on recent events and the potential impact of the Farnham Infrastructure Programme on 2025 events and that this had led to the Carnival Committee considering the future of the Carnival.

Cllr Murray reported that the Craft Month events had been well attended with internationally recognised artists taking part and that the first Lantern Festival had over 500 lanterns distributed with the procession taking place on 31st October.

The Working Group had agreed that a Film Festival would be considered for 2025/26 and asked the Town Clerk to include a draft budget of £15,000.

Cllr Murray reported on the development of the Farnham Business Improvement District which was working to create a new Farnham Bid brand, and that they were discussing running a 'Free after 3' campaign for car parks in Farnham during November and December.

Cllr Fairclough said that whilst he recognised the town centre was vital to the economy he hoped the Community & Culture Working group would consider extending activities across the town wards.

Cllr Dickson left the meeting at this point.

3 Strategy & Resources

Cllr White introduced the Notes of the Strategy & Resources Working Group meeting held on 24th October at Appendix D to the agenda. It had been a busy meeting with some key items discussed.

i) Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Cllr Beaman outlined the latest position on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme, and that there was likely to be consideration of the Farnham Board being disbanded once the implementation phase commenced but there was a need to have an oversight of the highways work. He advised the three councils were working together on the best ways of promoting Farnham and ensure messages were clear and realistic about the works with signposting to a single point for the latest news. Discussions were also taking place on the 2025 events programme and impacts from the works phasing.

ii) Neighbourhood Plan Task Group

Cllr White said the Working Group had been frustrated there had been no information supplied by Waverley on agreed topics which was impeding FTC in progressing the Neighbourhood Plan and the Town Council had not been invited to a meeting as agreed over an extended SANG at Moor Park.

a) Waverley Lane Statutory Challenge

The Working Group had discussed the Waverley Lane Statutory Review decision. The Judge had dismissed the appeal based on both the late delivery of papers by the Council's solicitors and the merits of the case. The result was disappointing as it meant the potential candidate area and its special landscape quality was lost forever but it had been an important matter to challenge even though the odds were stacked against local communities. The Working Group recommended that since that the judge had written a very thorough report the opportunity for taking the case further was limited. Council expressed profound disappointment at the outcome and that it was noted that a claim would now be pursued against the Council's solicitors insurers for costs associated with the late delivery of papers as set out in the Exempt Annex I. Council was proud it had stood up for its residents and the Neighbourhood Plan and fought the fight.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that FTC does not pursue the Waverley Lane Statutory Challenge further.

b) **Farnham Park Cemetery**

Council discussed whether Farnham should participate in the Planning Appeal in support of Waverley as a Rule 6 party and whether FTC should be legally represented given the complexity of some of the matters and the importance of the site adjacent to Farnham Park which had landscape importance. Costs for legal representation had been obtained and it was agreed attending as an Interested Party would be sufficient, with Farnham's Planning consultant presenting the issues for Farnham, would be the best solution. There were issues around the Red Line for the site, the building on the site and the landscape issues. It was hoped Farnham Town Council would be able to attend the Inspector's Management meeting.

The Leader mentioned there were other challenges ahead including the Old Park South with an appeal expected in February. Cllr Hesse asked if changes could still be made around access to that particular site. He was concerned that an approved appeal would be against the Neighbourhood Plan and with construction traffic down a residential road.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that

- 1) FTC should be an Interested Party supporting Waverley Borough Council in the Farnham Park Cemetery Appeal;**
- 2) Farnham would instruct its Planning Consultant to present the Council's case.**

iii) Younger People Panel

Cllr White advised on the results on the research undertaken by Westco. The number and quality of responses (over 900) had been well above expectation. They had also consulted 15 partner agencies. Overall the responses had shown most things were ok for most young people living in Farnham but there were concerns for the health and well-being for a minority. There was the option for Westco to drill down further or do ward based analysis. After discussion, Council agreed the next stage was to progress the commissioned work from Participation People who would approach schools and invite young people to be trained to interview their peers using the initial findings as the basis for their questions.

Council noted Cllr Murray had been co-opted onto the Younger People Panel as the link with South Farnham activities and Jubilee Hub.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that

- 1) The number of members of the Working Groups be increased to six;**
- 2) Cllr Earwaker be appointed to the Environment Working Group and Cllr Martin to the Community & Culture Working Group.**

iv) Standing Orders

Cllr White advised that following the reduction in councillors from 18 to 16, the number of councillors in Working Groups was reduced from 6 to 5. However, this had meant some meetings had been struggling to get a quorum and it was agreed to recommend increasing all the Working Group numbers back to six. Cllr Jackman raised again the issue of timing of meetings. The Leader responded by saying there was a balance needed for councillors and staff with the wide range of meetings needed and the requirements of double hatted councillors. He suggested councillors sent him an email with the ideal times and days from their perspective and the matter would be reviewed further. Cllr Beaman suggested named substitutes might be a better option and it was agreed this should be researched further to see if it were possible in a town or parish council.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that

- 1) The number of Members of the Working Groups be increased to six.**

2) Additional councillors be appointed to the Environment Working Group and the Community & Culture Working Group. Cllr Earwaker has offered to join the Environment Working Group.

Cllr Martin left at this point.

v) Contracts & Assets update

Council noted progress on a number of projects including Gostrey Meadow and required surveys for the planning application; the website tender; and the responses received to the playground consultation which had formed the basis for the playground tender.

vi) Finance

Cllr White reported on the financial position at the six month period which had been considered with detailed reports. Council noted income was running at 60% as a result of Section 106 and CIL monies received and that expenditure was running at 50%.

vii) Consultation

The Dempster Trust had asked Farnham Town Council to approve new Trustees in accordance with their Trust Deed.

It was RESOLVED unanimously that:

Mrs Jacqui Thomas be confirmed as a new Trustee on the Dempster Trust and Mr Keith Harris be co-opted onto the Trust.

viii) Conservation Areas Advisory Group

Cllr Hesse encouraged all councillors with a conservation area in their ward to take part in the Advisory Group.

C59/24 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Laughton introduced the Minutes of three meetings that had been held since last Council on 16th and 30th September and 14th October at Appendices E, F and G.

There were three key matters he drew attention to:

- The first was Land at Bourne Woods, Tilford where the applicant requested filming after 23.00. Despite FTC's objection, Waverley had authorised the request with concern this could now set a worrying precedent.
- The second was an application to extend the sports facilities at Weydon Academy, Wrecclesham. There had been strong local objections due to a combination of extra traffic, extra noise and light pollution.
- The third was Farnham Park Cemetery in Hale Rd. Following the application refusal, the Ismaeli Trust had lodged an appeal which would be heard over six days between 17/12/24 and 16/1/25.

C60/24 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

There were no additional actions reported.

C61/24 Reports from Other Councils

There were no reports from other councils.

C62/24 Reports from Outside Bodies

- i) Cllr Murray advised that additional volunteers were being sought for the Farnham Fireworks.

- ii) Cllr White asked that if any councillor had not been contacted by the Outside Body they were on since being appointed, they should let him know.

C63/24 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 19th December at 6pm.

C64/24 Exclusion of the Press and Public

It was RESOLVED *nem con* to exclude the press and the public in view of the confidential contractual and staffing matters being discussed.

C65/24 HR Panel

Council received a report on the HR Panel that had met on 23rd October. The Panel had reaffirmed the membership of two Appeal panels with Cllr Laughton replacing Cllr Mirylees. It received the detailed Job Evaluation results following the review by Council HR Governance & Support, with a recommendation that the evaluation results and proposed honorarium for taking on additional responsibility be implemented effective from 1st April 2023. Council was recommended to approve new weekend working rates for events and correcting an error relating to pensionable benefits for overtime which had been caused by the payroll supplier at an estimated cost of £3,600 per annum. Council noted arrangements for the recruitment of the replacement for the Business & Facilities Manager and for the Town Clerk's appraisal.

It was Resolved *unanimously* that the report and recommendations of the HR Panel be approved.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 8.35 pm

Chairman

Date

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