



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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Notes Strategy & Finance Working Group

Time and date

9.30 am on Tuesday 13th October, 2020

Place

Zoom Remote Meeting

Attendees:

Members: Councillors John Neale (Lead Member), David Attfield, David Beaman, Roger Blishen, Carole Cockburn, Sally Dickson, Alan Earwaker, Brian Edmonds, Mark Merryweather and Pat Evans (ex-Officio)

Officers: Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager), Iain Lynch (Town Clerk) and Clare Kennett (Governance & Community Engagement)

1. Apologies

POINTS	ACTION
No apologies were received.	

2. Declarations of interest

POINTS	ACTION
Cllr Merryweather declared an interest in agenda item 7.2 as a member of Waverley Borough Council with responsibility for agreeing CIL grants. Cllr Attfield declared an interest in agenda item 9 as the owner of a neighbouring property to Tice's Meadow.	

3. Minutes of the last meeting

POINTS	ACTION
The notes from the meetings held on 8 th September were agreed.	

4. Collective responsibility of Council and powers - NALC Legal Topic Note I

POINTS	ACTION
Councillors noted NALC Legal Topic Note I, which outlines councils' powers to discharge their functions, with reference to point 4 and how a council cannot delegate the performance of its statutory and legal responsibilities to an individual councillor. The Town Clerk reminded councillors that Council can only make decisions collectively whether on policy, contractual or staffing matters. The Town Clerk reminded councillors that matters of a confidential nature must not be discussed in a public forum, including when meetings were held virtually and councillors were in attendance from home.	

5. Finance report

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The following financial reports as presented with the agenda were reviewed with attention drawn to the following matters:</p> <p>i) Bank reconciliation at 30th September 2020 – the bank reconciliation was reviewed and noted.</p> <p>ii) Income and expenditure report at 30th September 2020. The report showed budget impacts to income and expenditure as a result of Coronavirus during the financial year. Income was slightly down because of the loss of income generated at events and sponsorship. Expenditure was also down on a pro-rata level due to reduced expenditure on events. The Town Clerk went through the detail of the budget codes drawing attention to variations and responding to questions from councillors. Councillors agreed to changes that would lead to a revised budget. Key budget impacts were reported in the financial report prepared by the Town Clerk in Appendix F.</p> <p>The Town Clerk informed councillors that it was too early to understand what would happen to Council Tax collection rates for next year and the impact on FTC's budget. Waverley had seen a small reduction in monies collected but the real economic impacts had not yet happened. The potential Band D numbers that would apply next year were not yet available and Waverley had not had the opportunity to consider whether they would reduce the collection rate percentage multiple (currently 99%). The impact for FTC if the multiple was reduced was approximately 67p per Band D property for a 1% reduction. The income generated by a 1% increase in the precept would be £11,460.</p> <p>iii) Statement of investments at 30th September 2020. Members reviewed the statement of investments. The Town Clerk explained that investments are running at 0.01 to 0.03% and are budgeted income from interest was likely to reduce further over the next few years. Members noted that the CCLA Property Fund was holding up well with a yield of 87% on dividends. Members discussed the impact of potential negative interest rates and the Town Clerk commented that Council, in this scenario, could possibly look to bring projects forward in order to spend reserves. It was noted that other investment opportunities should</p>	

<p>be researched.</p> <p>iv) Outstanding aged debtors. Members reviewed the debtors list at 30th September 2020 and the Town Clerk provided explanations against the debtors over three months old and said none were of cause for concern currently. Some of the debtors relate to bookings for future events and FTC is in the process of cancelling invoices and issuing refunds. Two of the debtors related to sponsorship were being contacted to request payment and due process was being followed.</p> <p>v) Internal Auditor. The Working Group agreed to recommend to Full Council the re-appointment of Mr Paul Hartley as Internal Auditor for 2020/21. The tender process to appoint a new internal auditor for the next financial year would take place.</p> <p>vi) Grants update. Members noted the situation of Brightwells Gostrey Centre and agreed the release of the second phase grant payment. The Town Clerk reported that the meals on wheels service had continued, working with Waverley, and the centre was preparing for a new start following redundancies.</p> <p>vii) To review latest BACS and cheque payments. The Town Clerk thanked councillors for their support with processing payments remotely and reminded councillors that financial documents were available for inspection.</p> <p>viii) Any other financial matters to report: The Business and Facilities Manager informed councillors that FTC had won the contract to supply winter and spring bedding at the Lion and Lamb yard.</p>	<p>Recommendation to Council It is recommended that Mr Paul Hartley be reappointed as Internal Auditor for 2020/21.</p>
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6. Conclusion of External Audit 2019/20

POINTS	ACTION
Councillors welcomed the conclusion of the 2019/20 External Audit (Appendix G) which was unqualified.	It is recommended that Council welcomes the conclusion of the unqualified 2019/20 External Audit.

7. Reports from Task Groups

POINTS	ACTION
<p>i) Infrastructure Planning Group</p> <p>a. The meetings held in September were noted.</p> <p>b. Planning consultations. Cllr Neale reported that a response to the government's Changes to the Current Planning System consultation had been submitted. Cllr Neale informed councillors that Cllr Cockburn was taking the lead on drafting a response to the Planning for the Future and Transparency and Competition consultations.</p>	<p>To circulate the list of invitees for LLF meetings and to receive nominations from councillors.</p>

<p>c. Farnham Infrastructure Programme. Cllr Neale reported that a Farnham Infrastructure Programme leaflet, to promote the Local Liaison Forum (LLF) and resident survey, had been printed and would be distributed to GU9 and GU10 postcodes. A series of eight LLF meetings would take place until mid-January to inform key stakeholder groups, with the first meeting taking place on 21 October for residents' associations and The Farnham Society. Councillors agreed to provide the Governance and Community Engagement Manager with the details of groups who could be invited to the meeting. The current list would also be shared with councillors. Cllr Neale said that the programme of meetings would be circulated to councillors to inform them of the key programme dates. The LLF meeting information would be available on the website and promoted through other channels, including the media.</p> <p>d. Dyas Yard. Cllr Neale informed councillors that a discussion regarding improvements to the yard had taken place with the manager of the store. This was in relation to wider discussions taking place with the Farnham Infrastructure Programme as outlined in Appendix J. The Working Group noted this proposal and drawing had not been discussed at any Council meeting and that individual councillors were not authorised to represent matters that Council had not decided collectively. The Mayor, speaking as the Chairman of Council, said that processes set out in Standing Orders must always be followed and that individual councillors should not work in isolation or give the impression they were representing the Town Council when they were not.</p> <p>2. Community Infrastructure Projects Task Group. The notes of the meeting held on 6 October (Appendix K) were received. An extension until 31 January 2021 had been granted by Waverley. The Town Clerk said that the Task Group had recommended that an application should be progressed for funding for Gostrey Meadow, as projects previously discussed were on land owned by Waverley and timescales did not allow for detailed consultation. Councillors agreed to endorse the change of emphasis for CIL funding for Gostrey Meadow for recommendation to Full Council.</p> <p>3. Assets Task Group. The notes of the meeting held on 16 September 2020 were received. No further update was required.</p> <p>4. Wellbeing Task Group. No further update.</p> <p>5. Younger People Task Group. Councillors agreed to defer the report from Surrey Clubs for Young People for discussion at the next meeting of the Younger People's Task Group.</p> <p>6. HR Panel. The Town Clerk reported that the substantive post had been readvertised and the process was being managed by Trevor Leggo, SSALC.</p>	<p>Recommendation to Council It is recommended that the CIL funding application be submitted for Gostrey Meadow.</p>
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8. Strategy meeting

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Town Clerk informed councillors that the next meeting would be held on 15 October 2020 and councillors would have the opportunity to debate the future direction of FTC for 2021/22. Cllr Neale advised that an additional agenda paper would be circulated.</p> <p>Cllr Merryweather left at 11.30</p>	

9. Assets of Community Value - Tice's Meadow

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Working Group noted that the Tice's Meadow Bird Group has applied to Waverley for the Farnham Quarry nature conservation site to become an Asset of Community Value.</p> <p>Councillors welcomed the application and congratulated the Bird Group for their excellent conservation work but were concerned that Waverley Borough Council considered it was unnecessary to consult with Town and Parish Councils on such matters.</p> <p>Councillors noted the site had again been put up for sale by Hanson and agreed to encourage the landowner to work with the Bird Group.</p> <p>The Working Group reaffirmed Council policy to support the work of the group to maintain the site for full public enjoyment.</p>	<p>Recommendation to Council</p> <p>Farnham Town Council:</p> <p>1) Welcomes the Asset of Community Value Designation for Tice's Meadow;</p> <p>2) Congratulates the Tice's Meadow Bird Group for their excellent conservation work;</p> <p>3) Encourages Hanson PLC to sustain the site of nature conservation and the work of the Tice's Meadow Bird Group; and</p> <p>4) Supports the Tice's Meadow Bird Group in progressing any application to retain the site for public enjoyment.</p>

10. Contracts and assets update

POINTS	ACTION
<p>1) The Town Clerk updated councillors that the CCTV server would be in operation by next week and the new audio system in the Council Chamber would be completed that day. The old audio system may be able to be used in FTC's Byworth Suite meeting room to improve facilities.</p> <p>The Business and Facilities Manager updated councillors on work at the cemeteries, gas works at the depot and confirmed the requirement to build a brick structure to house the electricity</p>	<p>Recommendation to</p>

cables next to the toilet block.	Council
2) The Business and Facilities Manager said that urgent and remedial repairs to the play equipment at Gostrey Meadow would cost £8,300 to bring them into good working order. Councillors agreed, with one abstention, to recommend to Full Council that this sum be spent on improving facilities which are much enjoyed by the local community.	It is recommended that the sum of £8,300 be spent on urgent and remedial repairs to the playground at Gostrey Meadow.

11. Consultations

POINTS	ACTION
Cllr Cockburn reported that she had been working on the response for the Government's planning consultations.	
Cllr Dickson left at 12.00	

12. Town Clerk update

POINTS	ACTION
The Town Clerk updated councillors on plans for Remembrance Day on Sunday 8 th November 2020. A small Covid-secure event was being planned for around 30 to 60 invited guests, including Jeremy Hunt MP and Brigadier Hood DL, at the War Memorial in Gostrey Meadow. The road would be closed during the short service which would include extra readings and the Alder Valley Brass band. The Town Clerk said that the event would only go ahead if guidance and the current Covid-19 situation allowed it.	

13. Date of next meeting

POINTS	ACTION
The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 1 st December at 9.30 am.	

The meeting ended at 12.20 pm

Notes written by clare.kennett@farnham.gov.uk