



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 29th July, 2021

Place

Army Reserves Centre, Guildford Road, Farnham.

Councillors

Councillor Alan Earwaker (Mayor)
Councillor David Attfield
Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Roger Blishen
Councillor Carole Cockburn
Councillor Sally Dickson
Councillor Paula Dunsmore
Councillor Pat Evans
Councillor John "Scotty" Fraser
Councillor Andy MacLeod
Councillor Michaela Martin
Councillor Mark Merryweather
Councillor Kika Mirylees
Councillor John Neale
Councillor John Ward

Apologies for absence

Cllrs Brian Edmonds, and Michaela Wicks

Officers Presents:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk
Iain McCready, Business and Facilities Manager

There were 2 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.

C27/20 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Edmonds and Wicks.

C28/20 Disclosures of Interest

There were no disclosures of interest apart from those from double and triple hatted councillors.

C29/20 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th June were agreed as a correct record for signature by the Mayor.

C30/20 Questions and Statements by the Public

There were no questions or statements from the public.

C31/20 Town Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that Farnham Town Council was shortlisted for the prestigious Council of the Year award, one of only five councils in the running for the award would be decided by a public vote. The Mayor advised that the NALC Star Councils awards were the only awards in England that recognise the parish and town council sector's positive contribution to its communities, and he urged councillors to encourage their residents to vote for Farnham.

The Mayor reminded Council that a 'Thank You' reception was being held at Waverley Abbey House on 18th August for all those who had helped with the response to the Pandemic in Farnham.

The Mayor announced that the Civic Service would now be held at 3pm on 10th October in St Andrew's Church.

In terms of recent engagements, the Mayor had attended 34 events in 35 days including opening the pop-up café at Waverley Abbey House which was open until the end of August and an event when Guy Singer donated £500 raised from his Walkfest to Farnham Assist.

C32/20 Questions by Members

Cllr David Beaman raised the following:

"Wednesday 22nd September is designated World Car Free Day in which motorists should be encouraged to give up their cars for a day. Given that Farnham Town Council has declared a Climate Emergency, what initiatives does Farnham Town Council intend to take to encourage councillors, staff and residents to use alternative forms of transport (public transport, cycling and walking) where they are available on that day?"

Since both Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council have both declared a Climate Emergency, I intend to ask a similar question at meetings of Surrey County Council's Cabinet that is being held on 20th July and Waverley Borough Council's Full Council that is being held on 3rd August."

In response, the Leader, advised that Farnham Town Council would encourage staff, councillors and residents to avoid using their cars wherever possible on Car Free day. He also said the climate emergency and carbon reduction challenge meant that everyone should

look at ways of reducing car use and a social media would be used to promote this. He drew attention to a number of initiatives that Farnham Town Council had adopted which were aimed at reducing the council's carbon footprint including joining the 'cycle to work' scheme, purchasing electric and gas-powered vehicles and electric grounds maintenance machinery. The Council was investigating use of solar, and when the current gas boiler needed replacing a suitable alternative would also be sought. The Council would have to work with its partners and community in changing habits and attitudes in delivering modal shift the coming years and this was one of the messages emerging from the Farnham Infrastructure Programme.

C33/20 Working Group Notes

C34/20 Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group

Cllr Cockburn introduced the Notes of the Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group held on 1st July at Appendix B to the agenda.

There were no specific recommendations to Council by the Working Group had welcomed family members to present an appeal for a kerb set around a grave. The appeal was not upheld but officers and the Working Group dealt sensitively with the issue, as with all appeals, and was hoping to find an alternate solution with the family.

C35/20 Tourism and Events Working Group

Cllr Evans introduced the notes to the Tourism and Events meeting held on 11th July 2021 at Appendix C to the agenda.

It had been a long meeting covering a great deal of topics and there were no direct recommendations for Council. Cllr Evans drew attention to a great deal of work being done by officers to allow events to take place some with ongoing restrictions because of the pandemic. On 25th July there had been Music in the Meadow, the Farmers' Market and the West Street market all taking place on the same day.

Council noted that discussions had taken place on preparations for future events including the Food Festival on 26th September, the Christmas Lights switch on in November and the Christmas Market in December. Council also noted a range of partner events in Gostrey Meadow which involved support from the Town Council including the Sausage and Cider Festival in Gostrey Meadow, and the VE VJ event.

Cllr Evans drew attention to the new Book and Literary Festival which had had its first Steering Group meeting and a budget had been recommended to Strategy & Finance. Cllr Dickson expressed concern that the Book Festival seemed to be expecting the Fringe Festival writers' competition to be reorganised for the Book Festival. The Town Clerk confirmed this was a misunderstanding and there was no desire to duplicate or conflict with existing activities but there was a desire to involve all relevant and interested groups in the new festival.

Council noted ongoing work for the Business Improvement District, the application for additional funding to support the High Street, and challenges with raising sponsorship this year. In response to a question by Cllr Merryweather about the Welcome back Fund, the Town Clerk confirmed that officers expected to be able to meet the terms of the funding allocations.

Council noted that a complaint about the siting of the refreshment van in Gostrey Meadow had been received by another café business in Downing Street and discussed by the Working Group. Members had noted it was in the park as a service to users of the park and similar concessions had traded in Gostrey Meadow for several years. It was agreed that the concession should continue.

C36/20 **Strategy & Finance Working Group**

Cllr Neale introduced the detailed notes of the Strategy & Finance Working Group that had been held on 20th July.

- i) The Working Group had received and considered the detailed finance papers for the first quarter of 2021-22 covering the bank reconciliation and the detail income and expenditure reports. They were as expected and the release of the earmarked reserve for the Sea Cadets grant had been agreed. In terms of the Book and Literary festival Strategy & Finance agreed to recommend the budget request of the Tourism and Events Working Group.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the budget for the Book and Literary Festival be £10,000 and that the town Clerk make the necessary virements from within the existing budget.

- ii) The leader gave an update on the work of the Farnham Infrastructure Programme and the meeting of all councillors on the Infrastructure Programme Board that had taken place on 15th July to provide initial feedback on the 'quick wins' (now short and medium term interventions) draft, communications and the likely timetable for the high level presentation to the Department for Transport on the proposals for the A31 Farnham Corridor (including Hickleys Corner).

Cllr Cockburn reiterated her concern that these elements seemed to be progressing without input from the town to which Cllr Neale responded that he would make sure the Programme Team engaged with Farnham as best they could. Cllr MacLeod confirmed that this was a high level submission and there would be full consultation on and detailed proposals.

Cllr Fraser also expressed concern on the implementation of the HGV restrictions. He said he was angry that they were being implemented without consultation and would leave HGVs still using Alma Lane. The community had fought for years for alleviation of the volume and type of traffic, and he felt the proposals should be stopped as they were based on superficial information.

Cllr MacLeod advised there had been consultation on the HGV proposals and the Surrey officers had advised the restrictions should limit vehicles on Alma Lane. The Town Clerk added that the initial signage would start on the Hampshire side of the Beacon Hill Road roundabout and that the programme team had advised the impact of the new scheme would be reviewed and adapted if required.

Cllr Beaman said whilst the HGV ban may not be perfect it should be implemented and expanded if it could be improved further.

Cllr Neale advised that other projects were progressing including developing 20MPH zones, road reclassification and the wayfinding proposals. Council noted the work done to date and commented that the signs needed to be of good quality and appropriate for the conservation area but the proposals were acceptable in principle.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that sign-off on placement be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Leader and Lead Member of Tourism & Events.

In terms of the 'quick wins'/short and medium term interventions, Council noted the initial list was work in progress and that there would be workshops with FTC in August for the Council to form its view. Cllr Neale advised that county Councillor Catherine Powell had prepared a separate matrix which would be discussed and Cllr Martin advised that this was just a starting list for wider consultation.

The Town Clerk advised that there was time to adapt the priority list ahead of a briefing/workshop event for FTC with the Infrastructure Programme Team which was scheduled for 5th September.

- iii) Cllr Cockburn, as representative on the Biodiversity Action Plan Group introduced the proposed policy which has been recommended to Council by the Strategy & Finance Working Group. She commended it to Council. Cllr Dickson was disappointed it had not been discussed at the Community Enhancement Working Group in detail and asked that her objection be recorded.

It was resolved, with one objection, that the Biodiversity Policy, attached at Annex I to these minutes, be adopted.

- iv) Cllr Mirylees spoke to the work of the Young People's Task Group and the events scheduled for the summer. She also updated Council on progress on the Youth Shelter for Borelli Walk.
- v) Cllr Neale provided an update on other Task Groups including the Cultural Project Task Group and advised that consultants Bonnar Keenlyside had started their project. He also advised that the Riverside Sculpture Task Group had met and the brief for the commission was being prepared for distribution in September. In terms of the Trees and Hedgerows Task Group time was of the essence. The Town Clerk advised that officers were working with Surrey County Council to submit a bid for additional trees and hedgerows across Farnham to the Urban Tree Fund.

Cllr Neale advised that the draft Surrey Local Transport Plan 4 (circulated to all councillors) was open for consultation until October 24th. The plan set out the measures to tackle key transport issues, improving public transport, road safety and pollution for all modes of transport. Achieving carbon net zero would mean a step change in how transport was planned delivered and maintained. Comments can be made at <https://surreyltp4.commonplace.is/>. Council noted that the Infrastructure Planning Task Group would be meeting to review LPT4 and prepare the Council's response.

- vi) Council noted that the Boundary Commission was reviewing Waverley's wards and had agreed to reduce the number of Waverley councillors from 57 to 50. The implications for this would likely be a reduction of wards in Farnham from 9 to 8 and the Boundary Commission would be preparing proposals for consultation in the autumn.
- vii) Cllr Neale advised that FTC had been advised that the Independent Remuneration Panel was undertaking a periodic Review of Waverley Members' allowances. The Panel also can review allowances for town and parish councillors.

Council noted that Farnham Councillors had never taken up the option for allowances apart from the Mayor for his civic duties. Council also noted that the Working Group thought would be useful to await the outcomes of the Panel's work in the autumn before discussing further and seek information on how other Councils the size of Farnham operated. If appropriate, after further discussion by Council, a review of Farnham might be considered in 2022.

- viii) Cllr Neale advised that the Working Group had held its usual discussion on contract and assets matters noting issues with the Town Council lift; progress on the greenhouse insurance claim and an issue with the CCTV pedestrian counting software. It was agreed to recommend continuation of the contract with Ellis Whittam for Employment law, HR and Health and Safety advice for a five year period at a discounted rate.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Employment Law, HR and Health & Safety Support Contract with Ellis Whittam be continued for a five year period at a reduced cost of £1,895 per annum.

- ix) Council noted the matters in the Town Clerk's update and the motion from the Surrey Clerk's Branch that any proposals to create new unitary councils should be accompanied with legislation to ensure there were Town and Parish Councils covering the new unitary areas.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that

- i) Farnham Town Council supports the Surrey SLCC proposal that any new unitary areas be completely parished in order that there be democratic equity; and**
- ii) This proposal be raised with NALC and others.**

C37/20 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Fraser introduced the notes of the meetings held on 5th and 19th July. At these meetings there had been 76 applications (five large, 26 important, 44 routine and uncontroversial, and one mineral application). Work of the Consultative Group was hampered by the WBC Planning Portal being painfully slow and not containing all the relevant documents (eg constraints documents were omitted 22 times for applications considered on the 19th July).

Cllr Fraser referenced the new General Permitted Development Order and implications arising including the new concept of living with beauty and the requirement for the Local Planning Authority to use national Design Guidelines.

C38/20 Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation

The Town Clerk reported that in line with previous policy he had agreed the adoption of red K6 telephone boxes in Rowledge, West Street and Boundstone, which were being decommissioned by British Telecom. Uses (eg for defibrillators) were currently being discussed with community representatives.

C39/20 Reports from Other Councils

- i) Cllr Cockburn raised concern over the delay in Waverley's Local Plan Part 2. There was protection for inappropriate development in Farnham until April 2022 as a result of the Neighbourhood Plan, but there were significant risks for Farnham if the Local Plan did not progress speedily.

- ii) It was noted that the proposed extension of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding natural Beauty was to be subject to a Statutory Consultation in 2022. It had been identified in the Neighbourhood Plan and was to be welcomed.

C40/20 Reports from Outside Bodies

There were no reports from Outside Bodies.

C41/20 Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as being on Thursday 16th September at 7pm.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9.07pm

Chairman

Date