



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 16th September, 2021

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Councillors

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

Apologies for absence

Cllr Alan Earwaker and Cllr Brian Edmonds

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk

There were 3 members of the public and 1 member of the press in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were led by Revd David Uffindell, Rector of St Andrew's Church.

C43/20 **Apologies**
Apologies were received from the Mayor and Cllr Edmonds.

C44/20 **Disclosures of Interest**

In addition to disclosures from those who were double and triple hatted councillors, Cllr Cockburn declared an interest as a Trustee of the Ridgeway School.

C45/20 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th July were agreed as a correct record for signature by the Deputy Mayor.

C46/20 Questions and Statements by the Public

Mr Peter Goodman raised a question about the mobile coffee seller in Gostrey Meadow commenting that it had had an adverse impact on his business. He asked whether the impact on local coffee shops in Downing Street was taken into consideration when the licence to sell coffee on Gostrey Meadow on Mondays to Saturdays was granted. He also asked whether the council had considered that it would be better to have more diversity amongst retailers in this part of the town to attract shoppers rather than having a regular coffee van on Gostrey Meadow suggesting that a vendor selling products other than coffee would provide this. He also drew attention to environmental concerns with disposable coffee cups being used in town.

Cllr Evans responded as Lead Member of the Tourism and Events Working Group which supported business as part of its programme. She advised that there had been a concession selling coffee in Gostrey Meadow since 2015 when the owner of the Vintage Cake House, a previous owner of the premises occupied by the Electric Cycle Café, entered into an agreement with Waverley Borough Council. Subsequent traders have also had a similar concession providing a valuable service to families and users of Gostrey Meadow. The Tourism and Events Working Group reviewed this arrangement recently and considered the wider offer in town, but determined that the benefits of continuing with the service to users of Gostrey meadow outweighed the potential disbenefits.

Cllr Evans added that Farnham Town Council had worked with Waverley Borough Council, retailers and the Chamber of Commerce to support businesses during the emergence from the pandemic and would continue to do so as it promoted the rich variety of independent shops and businesses that made Farnham such a delightful place to visit. Unfortunately, national planning legislation and individual entrepreneurs determined which businesses take up retail opportunities in the town but the Town Council welcomed innovation, such as the Electric Cycle Café, choice and excellent customer service.

C47/20 Deputy Town Mayor's Announcements

The Deputy Town Mayor wished the Mayor, who was in attendance from home whilst recovering from Coronavirus, a speedy recovery.

C48/20 Questions by Members

There were no Questions by Members.

C49/20 Working Group Notes

C50/20 Strategy & Finance

Cllr Neale introduced the notes of the Strategy & Finance Working Group held on 7th and 10th September at Appendix B.

- i) The recommendation for a grant of £500 to the organisers of the Pilgrim Marathon was agreed.
- ii) Council noted arrangements to tender the West Street Cemetery Gates.

Cllr Cockburn declared an interest and absented herself for discussion on the next item.

- iii) Council reviewed the revised location for the café in Gostrey Meadow proposed by the Ridgeway School and discussed an additional option that Farnham Town Council investigate whether it should undertake the proposed works and lease the completed building to the Ridgeway School. The removal of the dilapidated old pavilion was also agreed ready for the moving of the Borelli Shelter in future.

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

- 1) **The Town Clerk discuss options further with Ridgeway School;**
 - 2) **Approval for Council to construct the building as an alternative to Ridgeway be agreed;**
 - 3) **The Town Clerk be authorised to go to the Public Loans Board to outline a request for funding to build of the Cafe in Gostrey Meadow; and**
 - 4) **The old Bowling Green Pavilion and fencing be removed.**
- iv) Council noted that the tenders for the refurbishment of the Victoria Road Public Conveniences refurbishment were being prepared, and that TUPE information for the in-sourcing of the offices and public convenience cleaning contract was awaited. Council further noted the latest position with the Hale Chapels and the Community meeting that had been held to offer the opportunity for the community to raise the funds for a full refurbishment. A representative of the Farnham Society was meeting with Cllr Fraser to consider whether there were any unexplored opportunities.
 - v) Council discussed the proposal to formalise permission for fishing in Gostrey Meadow now the Council had taken responsibility for the area and following concerns raised about the safety of visitors to the Meadow. It was noted that informal fishing had taken place over many years and that a trial arrangement in a designated zone should be made provided those fishing had the relevant Environment Agency licence.
It was RESOLVED, with Cllr Dickson and Fraser objecting, that:
 - 1) **A fishing Zone be designated under the trees in Gostrey Meadow with appropriate signage;**
 - 2) **Anyone fishing be required to have the appropriate Environment Agency licence; and**
 - 3) **The new arrangement be kept under review.**
 - vi) Council received the report of the FCAMP walk-round meeting with Sarah Wells and Sophie Piper looking at the proposed 20MPH zone signage and ev charger points. It had been agreed that the bollards should be conservation area style. Significant concern had been raised about the impact of the potential build outs in Castle Street proposed by Surrey CC to manage the 20MPOH Zone.

The location and style of the proposed bike shelters was also discussed. Council felt it was important to support local business and crafts people in the design in the conservation area and that any new shelter was cleaned and maintained. With Cllr Fraser abstaining, **it was RESOLVED *nem con*:**

- 1) **The location for the bike shelter be the former 'Bring' site in Victoria Road Car Park;**

- 2) **The shelter be built with high quality materials ideally by a local craftsman;**
- 3) **Waverley be asked to ensure the shelter is cleaned and maintained.**

- vii) Council was updated on the work of other Task Groups including the Younger People Task Group, the Cultural Projects Task Group, and the Riverside Sculpture Task Group. It was noted that the commission for the Riverside Sculpture would soon be published and councillors were encouraged to suggest names and circulate details as widely as possible.
- viii) Cllr Neale introduced a proposal to extend the role of the Farnham Conservation Area Management Plan Group to incorporate all of the town's Conservation Areas and include its work within a Town Council Task Group replacing the current informal arrangements of FCAMP and with wider membership reflecting the other conservation areas. With Cllr Cockburn abstaining, **it was RESOLVED *nem con* that:**
- 1) **A new Farnham Conservation Areas Task Group be created;**
 - 2) **The Town Clerk draw up Terms of Reference; and**
 - 3) **Membership include representation of all Farnham conservation areas, statutory bodies and organisations with an interest in conservation and historic buildings.**
- ix) Council noted its responsibilities to appoint Trustees to the Dempster Trust noting the relevant extract from the Trust Deed. Jon Curtis JP Chairman of the Dempster Trust had proposed that the Trustee body comprise George Alford, Peter Jeans JP, Paul Whitlock, Cathryn Trezise with two co-opted Trustees: Keith Newman, Alan Hunt. Noting that the balance of trustees might need to be reviewed for future nominations to ensure it was in accordance with charity commission expectations: **It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Trustees of the Dempster Trust be approved.**
- x) Council noted the arrangements in hand to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Deed of Friendship with Andernach; the Queen's Jubilee Weekend in 2022; and the rededication of the War Memorial as part of Remembrance Sunday.
- xi) Council considered the detailed reports attached at Annex 2 and Annex 3 to Appendix B with details of the proposed response to Surrey County Council on the Farnham Infrastructure Programme Short and Medium Term Interventions (formerly known as 'quick wins'). Cllr Neale said the Working Group had worked through issues discussed over the summer led by the County Councillors with additional inputs received in advance of the meeting by other councillors. It was noted that individual councillors or groups of councillors were not delegated authority to speak on matters in their own wards and Council had to come to a collective view. Overall, Council felt that the analysis on responses to the public consultation put forward by the consultants at the joint Councillor briefing had been disappointing as they seemed to propose more studies rather than action. Council noted that the outline proposals for the A31 corridor would not now be presented by Surrey to the Department for Transport until November.

The following points were made to enhance the response:

- a) Cllr Merryweather congratulated everyone for the work done to date but was very disappointed that Badshot Lea and Weybourne were not even on the map for action in the new 20MPH zones. Whilst he agreed with the detail of problems with overgrown routes, there was a broader point that infrastructure

would be improved if it were maintained and matters of enforcement and drainage were addressed.

- b) Council noted that the comments attributed to Waverley Borough Council which had not been formally adopted should be removed from the compiled response.
- c) Cllr MacLeod considered the Borough was critical to the connection between Castle Street and Brightwells and the narrow parts should receive some attention rather than all the focus being on Castle Street and Downing Street.
- d) Cllr Hesse was concerned that Surrey and the Consultants appeared to be pushing back on the 'café culture' ideas and a trail should be implemented without delay.
- e) Cllr Ward said it was positive that FTC was putting forward ideas for agreement and felt that with some adjustments, Annex 2 was a good document for sending but Annex 3 needed additional input from councillors. He suggested that 20MPH zones should be targeted but extended to cover all schools and the Wrecclesham Bridge and that the initial list should be expressed as being in no particular order as all were important and Café Culture was not the top priority in his view.
- f) Cllr Dickson agreed that these were positive proposals but the 'devil was in the detail' and suggested some changed to Annex 3 to reflect concerns in Hale and Upper Hale around Willow Way and the Alma Lane junction.

Cllr Hesse proposed, seconded by Cllr Mirylees, that the order of priorities supported by FTC be as in Annex 2.

Cllr Ward proposed seconded by Cllr Cockburn, that the list be amended and that the first item be moved to the bottom of the list and but that it be deemed as not in any particular order of priority. The amendment was carried with 7 in favour, five against and 2 abstaining and

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that Annex 2 be submitted to Surrey County Council.

- g) After further discussion, it was agreed that comments on Annex 3 which needed further work be submitted to the Town Clerk by the end of the following week and that the Town Clerk prepare an amended version based on the discussion at Council and comments received.

C51/20 Updates on other Working Groups

Council welcomed the excellent results received in South and South East in Bloom and congratulated the community groups including Space2grow for their achievements.

Cllr Evans advised that over 5,500 people had attended the successful Music in the Meadow season despite the restrictions in place and provided an update on preparations for forthcoming events including the Food Festival, Craft Month and the Christmas Lights.

C52/20 Planning and Licensing Applications

Cllr Fraser reported on the three Planning & Licensing Consultative Group meetings that were attached at Appendices C, D and E. There had again been a large number of applications (99) with 4 large or controversial, 79 routine and 16 others including 4 appeals and 3 licensing. He expressed concern again about the ponderous website of the Borough Council that severely hampered preparation for meetings both by the FTC officer and councillors.

Cllr Fraser advised that the responses from FTC to the Borough Council had now changed after the continued omission of Town Council caveats and provisos in respect of specific applications. Now FTC “objects unless” caveats are taken into account.

Cllr Fraser raised a number of concerns around national planning policy which were being advocated elsewhere and also advised on the reinstatement of quarterly planning meeting with the Borough Council.

The reports were agreed.

C53/20 **Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation**

The Town Clerk reported that he had purchased 20 ‘Portrait of Farnham’ books published by the Farnham Hedgehogs which would be used as civic gifts.

C54/20 **Reports from Other Councils**

Cllr Cockburn raised concern about the consultation on Local Plan Part 2 and resulting delay which would potentially cause issues for the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan land allocations and hoped it would be completed as soon as possible.

She advised that she had met with local MP the Rt Hon Jeremy Hunt and with his support was taking up the need for additional support for Neighbourhood Plans with the new Secretary of State Michael Gove.

C55/20 **Proposal under Standing Order 11.9**

The Deputy Mayor advised that as it was a suitable point in the agenda approaching 10pm, Council needed to consider whether to agree an half an hour extension; to continue the meeting until business was finished or to adjourn the meeting.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* to continue the meeting until business was finished.

C56/20 **Reports from Outside Bodies**

- i) Cllr Cockburn advised of the Surrey Hills Forum discussion on the AONB extension which was referenced in the Neighbourhood Plan and affected Rowledge and Moor Park in Particular.
- ii) Council welcomed the news that the New Ashgate Gallery had won the prestigious Art Gallery of the Year Award 2021.
- iii) Cllr Evans reported that she had attended the Lord Lieutenant’s award presentation to the Hale Community Centre where she represents the Council.

C57/20 **Date of Next Meeting**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 28th October at 7pm.

C58/20 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

The Deputy Mayor proposed the Exclusion of the Press and Public in view of the confidential item (commercial sensitivity) to be discussed at Exempt Annex 1 **and it was RESOLVED *nem con* to do so.**

C59/20 **Tices' Meadow**

Council noted it had agreed to support the community's efforts to retain Tice's meadow for public access and sustain the excellent achievements of the Tice's Meadow Bird Group. Over the past year, officers and members from Surrey, Waverley and Farnham had created a positive relationship with Hanson to facilitate a public sector or community bid for the site. Separately, the political leaders of the principal authorities around the area, led by Surrey CC, agreed to collaborate to purchase the site and agreement had now been reached with Hanson for SCC to purchase the site with each of the authorities making a financial contribution. It was expected that the sale would be completed at the end of 2021.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) Farnham Town Council contributes £10,000 to the local authority consortium bid to purchase Tice's Meadow;**
- 2) FTC continues to have representation on any Board overseeing the future management of Tice's Meadow.**

The Deputy Mayor closed the meeting at 10pm.

Chairman

Date