



# FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

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## Notes

### Strategy & Finance Working Group

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#### Time and date

9.30 am on Tuesday 19th October, 2021

#### Place

Council Chamber - Town Council Offices

#### Attendees:

Members: Councillors John Neale (Lead Member), David Attfield, Roger Blishen, Carole Cockburn, Pat Evans, George Hesse and Sally Dickson.

In attendance: Cllr Alan Earwaker, Cllr Mark Merryweather.

Officers: Iain Lynch (Town Clerk), Iain McCready (Business and Facilities Manager), Jenny de Quervain (planning and Civic Administrator) – part.

#### 1. Apologies

POINTS	ACTION
All Members were present. Cllr Dickson and Cllr Merryweather attended remotely.	

#### 2. Declarations of interest

POINTS	ACTION
There were no declarations of interest. Cllr Merryweather spoke as a member of the Executive of Waverley Borough Council in the item relating to Farnham Museum.	

#### 3. Minutes of the last meeting

POINTS	ACTION
The Minutes of the meeting held on 7 <sup>th</sup> September were agreed.	

#### 4. 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) <b>Conclusion of External Audit.</b> The Working Group welcomed the Notice of Completion of Audit 2020-21 at Appendix B, with no matters raised by the External Auditor. The Conclusion of Accounts was recommended for adoption by Council.</p> <p>ii) <b>Trial Balance at 30th September 2021.</b> The trial balance was reviewed and noted.</p> <p>iii) <b>Income and expenditure report at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021 at appendices D and E to the S&amp;F agenda:</b> The reports showed that overall income and expenditure was broadly on target noting that budgetted income had been reduced for prudent reason but bookings for events and activities after lockdown were strong. The end of year income would be above 100%, although some of the income to date related to earmarked funds for CIL and the Support Fund. In terms of expenditure overall it was running at 44% at the six month period with lower than budgeted costs for staffing as vacancies had been held and some areas of expenditure where spend was greater in the second half of the year. The Town Clerk went through the detail of the budget codes drawing attention to variations and responding to questions from Councillors</p> <p>iv) <b>Debtors at 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021</b> – Members reviewed the debtors list at 30<sup>th</sup> September and the Town Clerk provided explanations against the debtors over 3 months old and said none were of cause for concern.</p> <p>v) <b>Statement of Investments at 30th September and 10<sup>th</sup> October 2021.</b> Members reviewed the investments at the six month point and following investment of the second half of the precept.</p> <p>vi) Members noted that the payment slips for BACS and cheque payments were available for inspection as required, having already been reviewed in detail by two councillors.</p> <p>vii) <b>Farnham Support Fund.</b> The Strategy &amp; Finance Working Group noted the continued work of the Farnham Coronavirus Support fund and two specific proposals to rename it to the Farnham Support Fund and to increase the amount that can be requested from £300 to £350 with the possibility of making a grant of up to £500 in exceptional circumstances. It was noted that the other funding partners supported this move and it was agreed for recommendation to Council.</p> <p>viii) <b>Wrecclesham Community Centre.</b> The Town Clerk advised that the Trustees had requested that the Council consider extending the rent waiver agreed in 2020/21 for the first quarter of 21/22 as they were unable to open the centre until the end of May. Cllr Attfield proposed, Cllr Cockburn seconded, and it was agreed <i>nem con</i> to recommend to Council a rent waiver of £1,500.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b> <b>The Conclusion of the unqualified External Audit of the 2020/21 Accounts be welcomed .</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b> <b>The update on finances at the six month period be agreed.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b></p> <p>i) <b>The Farnham Coronavirus Support fund be renamed the Farnham Support Fund;</b></p> <p>ii) <b>the amount that can be requested be increased from £300 to £350 with the possibility of making a grant of up to £500 in exceptional circumstances.</b></p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b> <b>A rent waiver of £1,500 be agreed</b></p>

## 5. Grants Review

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Town Clerk introduced the Grants Review report at Appendix H by Wendy Varcoe MBE (former Chief Executive of the Surrey Community Foundation) who had been commissioned to undertake an independent review. The full report has been circulated to all councillors and is available upon request.</p> <p>The review concluded that the framework and process were very good and robust with a clearly worded and logical grants policy. Overall, the grant programme is being delivered to a high standard with the right level of due diligence in relation to the level of grants awarded.</p> <p>Wendy identified a few areas which would assist the Council in managing a limited funding pot to help meet the Council's priorities and supporting community groups as well. The Working Group reviewed each suggestion in turn and recommends to Council the following:</p> <p><b>Recommendation 1</b> The Council defines the specific priorities it wishes to address each year and includes the priorities in the Grant Policy and Guidelines. This will enable the funding to be more focused and meet the specific aims of the Council.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 2</b> A summary of grants awarded over the last 3 years and the monitoring summary of the previous year's grants is included within the Grant Programme report as part of the decision-making process. A simple pie chart would help to summarise the split of grants for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Categories of projects</li> <li>b. Geographical areas awarded</li> <li>c. Number of residents supported</li> </ol> <p><b>Recommendation 3</b> Organise and promote an annual Grants Workshop to provide information and support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Farnham Town Council grant programme and its specific funding priorities for the coming year</li> <li>• Other sources of funding with key speakers</li> <li>• Tips and best practice in competing funding applications</li> </ul> <p><b>Recommendation 4</b> Develop a system on the Council's</p>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>The response of the Strategy &amp; Finance Working group to the recommendations of the Grants review be agreed.</b></li> <li>2) <b>Councillors encourage community groups to apply for the community grants</b></li> </ol>

<p>website for the application form to be submitted on-line. Clearer information about the annual grants timetable would be of benefit to community groups.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 5</b></p> <p>Applicants are invited to offer feedback on the Grants process to enable the programme to improve each year and be responsive to local needs.</p> <p>Councillors are encouraged to invite community groups in their own area to apply for community grants. Officers to circulate press release with 2022/23 application details.</p>	<p>Agreed. Should help streamline applications and evaluation.</p> <p>Agreed. Would assist in making improvements for the future.</p>	
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## 6. Contracts and assets update

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Working Group considered an update on Contracts at Appendix I covering the following in details:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>West Street Cemetery Gates.</b> Tender briefing document sent to 7 specialist contractors listed in the Heritage Directory and published on the Contracts Finder website due for return on 25<sup>th</sup> November. The complexities with the fixing the gates and the likely increased costs for this additional element of work was noted. External funding was also being sought for the whole project but likelihood of success was uncertain.</li> <li>2) <b>Central Car Park Toilet refurbishment.</b> Following agreement to progress with a refurbishment rather than a rebuild, detailed specifications had been drawn up for a tender with some additional elements identified (design development, baby changing facilities, increasing the size of the accessible toilet to more modern standards, improving the service room at the rear of the toilets) and a significant increase in the contingency based on uplift in materials costs. The impact would require increasing the earmarked reserve to £160,000 rather than the agreed sum of £90,000, although the amount required would be subject to tender prices. Investigations had also taken place into the possibility of creating a ‘Changing Places’ toilet as a prefabricated pod attached to the toilet. However given the expected additional costs (in the region of £80,000) consideration of this proposal is deferred to a later date to take account of other providers, locations and grant funding that may be available.</li> <li>3) <b>Gostrey Meadow</b> The Working Group welcomed the news of the Green Flag for Gostrey Meadow which reflected the Management Plan for the years ahead as well as the current standards. Members felt the Green Flag standard was a good measure for future action plans being prepared for other sites. The Working Group noted that a meeting with the Ridgeway School and its architect in early November.</li> <li>4) <b>Tree Inspections.</b> Initial prices for the Quinquennial tree survey had been received. The survey would be more extensive covering the new land ownership albeit that surveys had been undertaken prior to transfer but it was expected the work could be undertaken for a cost within a budget of</li> </ol>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> It is recommended that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Victoria Road (Central Car Park) Public Conveniences refurbishment set out be progressed and the earmarked budget approval for the project be increased to £160,000;</li> <li>2. The Town Clerk be authorised to accept the most economically advantageous tender for the public convenience refurbishments, and undertake any necessary post tender negotiations and issue a letter of intent to the successful contractor subject to a further report on funding.</li> <li>3. The Town Clerk be authorised to accept the most economically advantageous tender for the West Street Cemetery gates, undertake any necessary post tender negotiations and issue a letter of intent to the successful contractor, subject to a further report on funding;</li> </ol>

<p>£7,000.</p> <p><b>5) Nursery Greenhouse</b> The Working group noted that the contractors working for the insurers had been tardy in removing the site of asbestos and the electricity supply had still not been connected. Officers had chased both matters and the removal of asbestos should take place in early November. An initial quotation had been received for a replacement greenhouse and further prices were being sought for the Insurers to determine the next steps.</p> <p><b>6) Contract renewals</b> The Working group noted the latest position on the Cleaning Contract Insourcing and the IT support contract.</p> <p><b>7) Hale Recreation Ground</b> The Town Clerk advised he had received correspondence from the Hale Recreation Committee regarding the potential transfer of Hale Recreation Ground from Waverley BC to Farnham TC. The Town Clerk advised that the land ownership includes the Hale War Memorial which FTC had previously expressed an interest in taking ownership for as it currently maintains the area around the War Memorial. The Working Group agreed to recommend pursuing the discussion for a transfer.</p>	<p><b>4.A Councillor oversee the tender opening ceremony for the bids for both the West Street Gates and the Central Car Park Toilets on 25 November at 1.30pm;</b></p> <p><b>5.The Town Clerk be authorised to award the Quinquennial Tree survey to the most economically advantageous tender within an earmarked budget of £7,000;</b></p> <p><b>6.The Town Clerk continue discussions with Waverley Borough Council and the Hale Recreation Ground Management Committee regarding the potential transfer of ownership to Farnham Town Council.</b></p>
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## 7. Farnham Infrastructure Programme

POINTS	ACTION
<p>Cllr Neale provided an update on the latest Farnham Infrastructure Board meeting which had agreed the Final Version of the Optimised Infrastructure Plan. He advised that the Workshop planned for 20<sup>th</sup> October by Surrey officers was involving wider partners on the Town Centre but an agenda had not been circulated. The date for the briefing for FTC councillors was awaited.</p> <p>In response to a question from Cllr Hesse, the Town Clerk confirmed that the response to the Short and Medium Term Interventions as agreed at full Council had been submitted to the Programme team.</p> <p>In terms of Wayfinding, comments from FTC had also been submitted and were with the consultants for the detailed walk round on placement which was imminent. Jenny de Quervain confirmed that FTC had not had a response back on its comments but she would be part of the walk round.</p>	

## 8. Local Transport Plan 4

POINTS	ACTION
<p>Cllr Neale tabled a paper that had been circulated overnight as a draft response to the LTP4. The Town Clerk advised that the draft was at a very high level and there would be an element of 'be careful of what you wish</p>	

<p>for' if the response were sent without relevant caveats on matters such as broadly welcoming 5G, restricting use of personal transport and demand management.</p> <p>Cllr Merryweather observed that some e-scooter trials appeared to be working well, and wondered if an e-scooter rental scheme should be considered for Farnham.'</p> <p>It was agreed to ask all councillors for further comments on the consultation (which had initially been circulated to all Councillors in August) by the end of the week in order that Cllr Neale could finalise his paper ahead of Council.</p>	<p>All Councillors to respond to Cllr Neale</p>
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## 9. Museum of Farnham

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
<p>Cllr Neale reported that a meeting between FTC and WBC had now been held with Cllrs Earwaker, Evans, Dunsmore, Neale and the Town Clerk representing the Town Council and senior officers and Executive members from Waverley. Papers following the meeting were expected.</p> <p>Cllr Merryweather offered to update the Working Group (as a WBC portfolio holder) and said that WBC had been seeking help from a wide range of people on the difficult problem of the Museum since 2019. An application to the MEND funding scheme had been unsuccessful and WBC had appointed consultants to better understand the way forward and whether the Museum can be separated from Willmer House and operate elsewhere. Repairs to the Grade I listed building still needed to be undertaken. What was clear was that Waverley cannot afford to maintain Willmer House and run an effective museum with half the collection stored elsewhere.</p> <p>Cllr Merryweather said that Waverley would welcome ideas and suggestions and ideas from FTC or others to find a workable solution. It was good that the meeting between FTC and WBC had taken place and he hoped both councils could be on the same page.</p> <p>After further discussion in which some councillors expressed a view that this should be a matter for Waverley to resolve without FTC involvement as the problem is one of lack of investment by WBC over many years, it was agreed to recommend the creation of a Farnham Museum Task Group to work alongside Waverley Borough Council, the Farnham Maltings and other interested parties to support Waverley in managing the challenges around restoring Willmer House and the future of the Museum. It was agreed that the Task Group should include the Leader, the Lead Member for the Tourism and Events Working Group, Cllr Hesse as a ward member, and the Town Clerk.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. A Farnham Museum Task Group be created to work alongside Waverley Borough Council, the Farnham Maltings and other interested parties to support Waverley in managing the challenges around restoring Willmer House and the future of the Museum.</b></li> <li><b>2. The Task Group should include the Leader, the Lead Member for the Tourism and Events Working Group, Cllr Hesse as a ward member, and the Town Clerk.</b></li> </ol>

## 10. Reports from Task Groups

POINTS	ACTION
<p><b>1) Riverside Sculpture Task Group</b> Jenny de Quervain confirmed that the brief had been prepared and that invitations for people to submit proposal were being sought from as wide an area as possible.</p> <p><b>2) Cultural Projects Task Group</b> The Town Clerk advised that the draft report was ready and a presentation would be made to the Task Group once a suitable date had been identified.</p>	

## 11. Boundary Commission Review of Waverley - draft proposals

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Working group reviewed the Boundary Commission proposals for Waverley (at Appendix L to the agenda) and the implications for elected representatives covering Farnham. The proposals saw the number of Borough councillors for Farnham reduced from 18 to 16 and the number of wards reduced from 9 to seven with the deletion of the Moor Park Ward and amalgamation of other area with a mix of 2 and three member wards. The consequence for the Town Council was that the Boundary Commission were recommending new Riverside and Runfold Wards, increasing the number of wards, and requiring a number of one two or three member wards.</p> <p>Cllr Neale had prepared a number of alternate options for consideration by the Town Council.</p> <p>After a detailed discussion, it was agreed to recommend the following to Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Alignment of Town wards within the Borough wards was a requirement;</li> <li>2) A reduction of Town Council members from 8 to 16 should be investigated;</li> <li>3) Where possible a pattern of 2 member wards was preferred;</li> <li>4) The merging of the Bourne and Runfold was not supported;</li> <li>5) The Moor Park area and name should be retained as a preference;</li> <li>6) A balance of 8 representatives south and north of the A31 would be preferred if achievable;</li> <li>7) A Community Governance Review by the Borough Council be undertaken by the Borough Council to determine the best pattern of options</li> </ol> <p>Cllr Cockburn and Cllr Merryweather left at this point</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Alignment of Town wards within the Borough wards is a requirement;</b></li> <li><b>2. A reduction of Town Council members from 8 to 16 should be investigated;</b></li> <li><b>3. Where possible a pattern of 2 member wards is preferred;</b></li> <li><b>4. The merging of the Bourne and Runfold is not supported;</b></li> <li><b>5. The Moor Park area and name should be retained as a preference;</b></li> <li><b>6. A balance of 8 representatives south and north of the A31 would be preferred if achievable;</b></li> <li><b>7. A Community Governance Review by the Borough Council be undertaken by the Borough Council to determine the best pattern of options</b></li> </ol>

## 12. Review of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding natural Beauty

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Working Group received details of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding natural Beauty Candidate Area. Cllr Cockburn advised that the designated area affecting Farnham had been incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan and Farnham Town Council should actively support the extension to the AONB.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend to Council that officers work with the Surrey Hills AONB to optimise the extension around the Farnham area.</p>	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> <b>It is recommended that:</b> <b>officers work with the Surrey Hills AONB to optimise the extension around the Farnham area.</b></p>

## 13. Review of the Great Austins Conservation Area

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Working Group noted that the review of the Conservation Area was proposing the reduction of part of the area that no longer reflected the Conservation Area characteristics. There was concern that the County Council had stated it would no longer repair the cobbled area because of cost. It was noted that there was a consultation event on 27<sup>th</sup> October.</p> <p>It was agreed to recommend that Council supports the realigned boundary for the Great Austins Conservation Area and presses for the maintenance of features such as cobbles that enhance the Conservation Area in accordance with the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan and Design Statement.</p>	<p><b>Recommendations:</b> <b>It is recommended that the realigned boundary for the Great Austins Conservation Area be supported; and the maintenance of features such as cobbles that enhance the Conservation Area in accordance with the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan and Design Statement be sought.</b></p>

## 14. Review of Council Policies/Strategy

POINTS	ACTION
<p>It was agreed that a meeting to review the FTC Strategy and implications for the 2022/23 budget should be held in November.</p> <p>[Subsequent to the meeting a an invitation to a Workshop from 6-9pm on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> November was circulated]</p>	

## 15. Town Clerk update

POINTS	ACTION
<p>The Town Clerk provided an update on a range of matters including FTC involvement in a National Cyber Security Centre Pilot for Town councils; the Surrey ALC AGM at which congratulations for the achievement of Council of the Year were given; a request for an update meeting with the CAB; Surrey collaboration in Farnham for COP26 on 10<sup>th</sup> November; restarting</p>	



arrangements for the recruitment of Town Crier with a launch activity at the Christmas Market; details for Remembrance Sunday and a request to replace the flags at the Badshot Lea Memorial; and the proposed Christmas Closure from Midday on Friday 24 <sup>th</sup> December to Tuesday 3 <sup>rd</sup> January.	
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**16. Date of next meeting**

<b>POINTS</b>	<b>ACTION</b>
The date of the next meeting was agreed as Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> December at 9.30.	

The meeting ended at 2.30pm Notes written by Town.Clerk@farnham.gov.uk