



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00 pm on Thursday 26th January, 2023

Place

Council Chamber - Farnham Town Hall

Councillors

Councillor Alan Earwaker (Mayor)
Councillor Michaela Wicks (Deputy Mayor)
Councillor David Attfield
Councillor David Beaman
Councillor Carole Cockburn
Councillor Sally Dickson
Councillor Pat Evans
Councillor Paula Dunsmore
Councillor George Hesse
Councillor Andy MacLeod
Councillor George Murray
Councillor John Neale
Councillor John Ward
Councillor Tony Fairclough (from item 4)

Apologies for absence

John "Scotty" Fraser, Michaela Martin, Mark Merryweather and Kika Mirylees

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch, Town Clerk
Rachel Aves
Lisa Tremeer, Communities and Administration Manager
Jenny De Quervain, Planning & Civic Administrator

There were 2 members of the public in attendance.

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

C81/22 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Fraser, Martin, Mirylees and Merryweather.

C82/22 **Disclosures of Interest**

Cllr Evans disclosed an interest as a Trustee for Hale Community Centre relating to item 9 on the agenda – allocation of Community Grants, and took no part in the discussion.

Cllr Murray declared a non-pecuniary interest relating to item 9 on the agenda – report from the Internal Auditor as he knows Mike Platten on a social level.

Cllr Neale disclosed a non pecuniary interest in relation to grants as the Council's representative on the New Ashgate Gallery, 40 Degreez and the Farnham Maltings.

Cllr Cockburn declared an interest as a Trustee of the Ridgeway School and left the room for discussion of the item relating to Gostrey Meadow.

C83/22 **Minutes**

The minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on 15th December 2023 were agreed.

C84/22 **The Co-option of Councillor for the Bourne Ward**

There was one candidate who had completed an application to fill the vacant position to represent the Bourne, Mr Tony Fairclough. Mr Fairclough was invited to make a 3-minute presentation. There were no questions from the councillors and Cllr Fairclough was duly elected as councillor for the Bourne, signed his declaration of office and took his seat for the rest of the meeting.

C85/22 **Questions and Statements by the Public**

There were two members of the public who asked questions.

- 1) Mr Clive Teague asked if the Town Council was aware of the raw sewage discharging in Crondall and Water Lane, and if it had plans to help to rescue the town's rivers. He advised that there was an awareness raising event taking place on Saturday in Gostrey Meadow, and asked if the Town Council could help raise concerns.

The Town Clerk said that the Town Council was generally aware of discharges as this had been a concern flagged in the past, most recently in Farnham Park. It was noted that if Councillors wished to progress the issues, there could be a motion later in the agenda under the Community Enhancement Working Group report.

- 2) Waverley Councillor Jerry Hyman made a statement about the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). He said that the discussion at the LCWIP meeting in December had been unsatisfactory and he understood there to be meetings of the Farnham Infrastructure Programme in January and asked members to note three important considerations:
 - Proposed LCWIP routes, which stop at the Town Centre, forcing users on South Street. This could be added in Brightwells but that was in in the plan.
 - In the medium term, Scholars Way, and the Hale trail have disappeared from the plan. Borelli Walk could not be done until the Brightwell's scheme was completed. The cycle routes were on narrow paths and it was important to provide space for walkers and shoppers.

- The need for transparency in consultation and a dedicated lead officer and recovery plan needed to be made in 2023.

Cllr Hyman added that he was concerned about the need to bid in summer 2023.

The Mayor said that this was on the agenda for the upcoming Farnham Infrastructure Plan meeting, which members and officers were attending. It was noted that borough and town councillors were able to attend, and Jenny de Quervain agreed to request the information be sent to Cllr Hyman.

Cllr Dickson added that the Hale trail has had budget which was in the holding account at Waverley BC and now that it was back with Waverley BC, she was encouraged and would pursue its progress. Cllr MacLeod said that he would love to see cycling routes through the town centre, but that he saw a problem with central Farnham due to narrow roads, where walking takes priority over cycling, especially for retail areas. He added that he did agree with the issues of the LCWIP meetings.

C86/22 **Town Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor expressed his delight at being able to attend the celebrations for two Farnham residents celebrating their 100 year birthdays. One of those celebrations was for Mr Frank Rhodes who was well known in Farnham for his In Bloom awards.

The Mayor advised that he had been attending all the committee meetings that took place at FTC over the past few weeks and wanted to thank all councillors and staff involved for their efforts and hard work in what had been a very busy month.

C87/22 **Questions by Members**

Cllr Neale raised the following question regarding the Farnham Infrastructure Programme:

'Now that this council has abandoned its objective of delivering some form of pedestrianisation in Farnham town centre (Paragraph 9 Farnham Project, Key Principles and Objectives, Adopted by Farnham Town Council 14-05-20), how does it expect to achieve, or to influence the principal councils to achieve:

1. Improvements to air quality in the town centre, in accordance with the Local Air Quality Action Plan?
2. Encouragement of modal change in its citizens' travel choices, together with a determined plan for the introduction of attractive and viable bus transport options?
3. The provision of a safer and viable road system for cyclists to access and traverse the town centre?
4. Its declared Climate Change policies, in particular to encourage the local community to reduce its carbon footprint. (Council Minute C81/19: v of 19th September 2019)?
5. Reduction in modern traffic management paraphernalia, with a view to improving the heritage characteristics of the town centre conservation area?

The inference of all these statements is that a transformation of the town centre, which disallowed through traffic by, say, 2030, through a phased introduction of enabling measures, would have made a major contribution to these objectives. Contrarily, the current plans of the council are likely to

exacerbate the problems. So, what is the council now expecting to do, instead, to address these issues in order to achieve health and wellbeing benefits for Farnham residents? ‘

Cllr Beaman responded by thanking Cllr Neale for his question and confirming that Farnham Town Council remained fully committed to pursuing and implementing policies that would encourage modal shift from cars to other modes of transport (cycling, walking and public transport) in order to meet its declared Climate Change objectives, reduce air pollution and create a better environment across the whole town for the benefit of everybody living, working and visiting the town centre as well as the residential areas in North and South Farnham.

He reminded Cllr Neale that to achieve this objective Farnham Town Council had consistently stated that it would eventually like to see pedestrianisation of the town centre but appreciated that this could only be realistically achieved with adequate mitigation measures being implemented to deal with traffic that would be displaced to residential areas if the town centre was to be pedestrianised.

Cllr Beaman emphasised that Farnham Town Council continued to play an active and constructive role in the Farnham Infrastructure Programme which was being undertaken jointly with Surrey County and Waverley Borough Councils and, as reported the Farnham Herald, was campaigning for the current proposals to also include construction of a Hart Link Road from Castle Hill to West Street.

If a Hart Link Road was constructed this would allow consideration to then be given to totally pedestrianising the bottom half of Castle Street. This would remove a significant proportion of traffic that currently has no option but to travel through Central Farnham and would also remove the need for a potentially hazardous challenging right turn from Castle Street into The Borough as envisaged in the current proposals.

C88/22 **Working Group Notes**

i) **Tourism and Events**

Cllr Evans provided feedback from the meeting held on 11th January 2023 at Appendix B to the agenda and advised that there were no specific recommendations from the Working group for Council.

Cllr Evans update Council on preparations for the Coronation weekend. The Town Clerk confirmed that he had also attended a meeting with Witley, Godalming and Haslemere Councils to discuss their plans for the Coronation. If there was a beacon (and there had been no confirmation regarding beacons for the coronation), Farnham Park had been identified by the Farnham Society as the location for a permanent fixture. It was noted this could pose a problem as it was in a designated park very close to a listed monument with archaeological potential and would probably also require planning permission.

Council noted that there was a meeting at the Bush Hotel for the relaunch of the Farnham Chamber of Commerce that evening, Thursday 26th January 2023. It was very positive for the fledgling Business Improvement District team and the new Chamber of Commerce to work together and make a good case for business in Farnham to sustain itself through the challenging times ahead.

Cllr Hesse congratulated the Tourism and Events team for all their hard work and efforts in putting on such wonderful events in Farnham.

ii) **Strategy and Finance**

Cllr Evans introduced the notes from the Strategy and Finance Working Group Meeting held on 17th January 2023.

The quarterly finance reports to 31st December had been considered in detail including the Income and Expenditure reports, the Statement of Investment and Reserves, and the current debtors list. Council noted that the position at the 9 month period was good with income running at 117% of budget (including ring-fenced CIL receipts) and expenditure running at 83.5% of budget. The timetable for the closing of the accounts was noted.

- a) The Fees and Charges report was reviewed and the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 were discussed. There were numerous proposed changes for 2023/24.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- **The fees and charges set out at Annex I be agreed.**
- **The Town Clerk be authorised to use discretion to negotiate the best arrangement for the Council in relation to Sponsorship and items where more complex arrangement are planned using the approved Fees and Charges as the basis for discussion.**

- b) The Investment Strategy 2023/24 at Annex 2 was recommended for approval. Council noted the requirement to minimise risk and the short-term nature of investments (less than 1 year).

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Investment Strategy 2023/24 be adopted.

- c) Cllr Evans advised that Community Grants had been discussed in detail and that the funding proposed in the budget for 2023/24 was as follows:

- Service level agreements: £60,000
- In-year community grants: £18,000
- Grants funded from other budgets: £4,500
- Small Grants (in year allocation): £2,000

Cllr Evans reminded Council that detailed presentations were made by organisations in receipt of regular grants towards running costs (the Service Level Agreement organisations), noting that the presentations had been very good and there were difficult decisions to make. Cllr Evans presented each proposed SLA funding grant but left the chamber before the Mayor presented the proposed funding for the Hale Community Centre. Cllr Evans returned to present the remainder of the organisations.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the SLA Grant amounts be set as follows:

Farnham Maltings	£10,000
Citizens Advice Bureau	£20,000
40 Degreez	£2,000 plus £6,000 for outreach
Hale Community Centre	£7,000
Hoppa Community Transport in Farnham	£10,000
Brightwells Gostrey Centre	£5,000
Total:	£60,000

Members considered the proposed allocations for organisations supported by specific service budgets and **it was RESOLVED *nem con* to fund the following:**

Organisation	Fund from	Allocations
Farnham Carnival	Tourism and Events. Shared costs with Picnic in the Park	£2,000 (23/24 funding)
Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership	Community Enhancement	£2,500 (23/24 funding)
Farnham Round Table – Santa’s eSleigh	Community Initiatives Fund	£2,000 (22/23 funding)
The Farnham Museum – Herald Archive Digitisation Project	Community Initiatives Fund	£2,000 (22/23 funding)
	Total:	£4,500

Community Grant Applications listed at Annex 3 were considered together and it was **RESOLVED *nem con* to award the funding as set out at Annex 3.**

d) Cllr Evans introduced the Interim Internal Auditor’s Report at Annex 4 which was received by Council noting the Officers’ responses.:

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) The Internal Auditor’s report be welcomed.**
- 2) The Town Clerk’s responses be agreed.**

e) **Task Groups**

i) **Coronation Task Group** Council noted published arrangements included Monday 8th May being a volunteering day and that FTC staff were looking at options. Preparations were in hand for a whole day event in Gostrey for people to be able to watch the Coronation on a big screen with music to follow. Council supported underwriting insurance for street parties that met the criteria as a means of allowing as many people as possible to participate in the Coronation celebrations.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1. A budget of £20,000 from the Community Initiatives budget be set for the Coronation Celebrations;**
- 2. The Council underwrite the costs of insurance of street parties that met the relevant criteria;**
- 3. The position with the gift of the Farnham Society Beacon be noted.**

ii) **Assets Task Group**

a) Council welcomed the news that work had begun on the Hale Chapels project on 23rd January 2023. The contractor for the project was Landform.

Cllr Cockburn left the room prior to the discussion about Gostrey Meadow as a Trustee of Ridgeway School.

b) Council discussed the potential enhancement project recommended by the Strategy & Finance for Gostrey Meadow to replace the Toilets, create an accessible Play Area and build a Community Café. The Café was proposed to be in conjunction with Ridgeway School to give employability skills for its pupils and others. Town Clerk advised members that approval was required to take pre-planning advice from Waverley to discuss the ideas. It was

suggested there could be a competition for the design where the current toilets are located.

In discussion, the need to move the Falkner Fountain was confirmed, the move of the Borelli Shelter to provide space, and the benefits of creating a formal garden or retaining an alternate community use on the bowling green were discussed, Cllr Attfield was keen to progress with the plan and proposed (seconded by Cllr Dunsmore that the wording of the first recommendation be changed to read 'FTC commits to the principle of delivering ...'.

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

1. **FTC commits to the principle of delivering new toilets, an accessible play area, and a Community Space/Café/training facility within Gostrey Meadow;**
 2. **Plan A Architects be commissioned to apply to WBC Planning for Pre Application advice on the proposal;**
 3. **Officers meet with the Ridgeway School to clarify their aspirations on the development and usage of the Café/community space**
 4. **Officers seek possible funding streams;**
 5. **Farnham Town Council commits £200,000 of Neighbourhood CIL to deliver the three elements of this project;**
 6. **Officers apply for funding for a Changing Places toilet if one can be accommodated within the scheme;**
 7. **The Borelli Shelter be moved at a location to be agreed;**
 8. **Town Clerk be authorised to investigate the potential for Public Works Loan Board funding for the project;**
 9. **To agree, in principle, to move the Falkner Fountain 2 to 3 metres or to another location for ease of access into Gostrey Meadow for vehicles.**
- c) Council noted the bandstand was showing signs of wear and tear and in need of refurbishment.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Town Clerk be delegated authority to redecorate and refurbish the Bandstand in Gostrey Meadow with a budget cost of £6,500.

- d) Cllr Evans advised that the Working Group had discussed the Croquet Club request for a long lease of the old bowling green for croquet and the construction of a pavilion. Members supported the development of a new club but considered the location was not ideal with the plans for Gostrey Meadow. Some alternate suggestions of locations in Badshot Lea, Weybourne and Wrecchesham were proposed for passing on to the new club.
- e) Council noted itemised obsolete IT and depot equipment that was beyond repair required disposal and removal from the assets register; an intermittent fault with the lift required repair; the replacement programme of fluorescent lighting with more energy-efficient units and redecoration required for some of the recent replacements. Council noted issues with disposing of collected flytipped items, the proposal to vinyl wrap the Mitsubishi and of the ongoing challenge of fixing the CNG supply.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Town Clerk be authorised to:

- **Dispose of the redundant IT equipment and update the asset register be updated;**
 - **Progress quotes and undertake the necessary redecoration of parts of the Council Offices from within the existing budgets.**
 - **Change the remaining baton fluorescent lighting unit to LED lighting but defer replacing clam lighting units until decoration is done;**
 - **Progress quotations to repair the lift with use of up to £35,000 of the Town Hall earmarked reserve if required;**
 - **Depot assets that were obsolete or too expensive to repair be listed following an inspection by the Town Clerk and Lead Member of the Assets Task Group and disposed of;**
 - **The Mitsubishi pick-up be repaired, and vinyl wrapped;**
 - **The issues with the CNG filling system be noted and progressed;**
 - **The removal of all flytipped items from the depot be noted;**
 - **The purchase of a container (up to a price of £6,500 to house the Christmas Lights) be deferred.**
- f) Council noted that the current lease was due to be renewed and that the Town Clerk was in discussion with the Trustees of the centre about this.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that the Town Clerk progress, with the Trustees of Wrecclesham Community Centre, the rent review for the next period.

- g) The retender for the Christmas Lights installation, takedown and testing with options to replace part and lease, or purchase was discussed. Cllr Dickson asked if it was possible to move some old lights to the area next to the cricket field and Town Clerk advised that could be included in the tender for the new lights.

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

- 1) A tender for the installation, takedown, call out and testing of the Farnham Town Council's owned Christmas lights be progressed;**
 - 2) New designs and costs (on a lease or purchase basis) for a new scheme of Christmas lights be sought.**
- iii) **Community Infrastructure Projects Task Group**
Council noted that £60,000 of the CIL receipts received to date had been allocated to the Central Car Parks Toilet Refurbishment. In the current financial year £206K had been received on top of some £40k in previous years.
The following 3 priorities had been identified:
- A new playground on Gostrey Meadow – phase 1 of CIL and using £54,000 committed from the Woolmead section 106 money.
 - New toilets on Gostrey meadow - Phase 2.
 - Community space – café on Gostrey Meadow in conjunction with the Ridgeway School which would be used as a potential training opportunity for young people.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) It was a priority to invest in Gostrey Meadow.**

2) An initial £200,000 of Neighbourhood CIL funding be allocated for the Gostrey Meadow playground, toilets and community café project.

iv) Farnham Infrastructure Programme

Cllr Beaman introduced his updated position paper on the proposed Link Road, at Annex 5, for adoption. The report represented FTC's contribution in a balanced way confirming that FTC had consistently argued that construction of a Hart Link Road was an essential part of the Farnham Infrastructure Programme (FIP) if it was to meet its objective of reducing traffic passing through Farnham Town Centre and improving air quality.

Council welcomed the agreement reached at the FIP Board meeting held on 16th December that the construction of a Hart Link Road should "remain on the table" for further discussion rather than the proposed recommendation "that further work on the route be paused and that it is removed from any emerging designs".

Council discussed the report noting some of the positive and negatives aspects of the plan. Cllr Neale considered a through road was not a viable option but agreed with access to the car park. Cllr Cockburn was concerned that the proposal compromised the integrity and character of Castle Street. Cllrs Hesse and MacLeod both wanted to ensure the paper did not hold up the improvements to the town centre. Good design of the scheme was essential and having Castle Street as a piazza would be the jewel in the crown of the conservation area. Cllr Ward congratulated Cllr Beaman on an excellent report setting out clearly the aspiration of the Town Council.

It was RESOLVED by 10 votes to 1 with 3 abstentions that the report on the Link Road at Annex 5 to the Strategy and Finance minutes be adopted.

f) Risk Management Report:

Members received the annual Risk Management Report, which had been considered through the Working groups and at Strategy & Finance.

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

- i) The Risk Management report at Annex 6 be welcomed and adopted.**
- ii) The work done by the Working Groups in managing risk be noted.**
- iii) Members received a briefing update from the informal Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group held on 12th January 2023 as well as an update on matters pertaining to The Community Enhancement Working Group, at Appendix C, as the meeting on 18th January 2023 was cancelled. Council agreed with Cllr Dickson's request for FTC to write a letter in support of the campaign to stop sewage being released into the rivers.

iv) Consultations

Council discussed the approach to the National Planning Policy Framework changes at Appendix P circulated to all councillors. It was noted that Rachel

Aves would prepare a draft response with any comments submitted by Councillors by 30th January. Cllr Cockburn expressed concern at the lack of protection for neighbourhood plans under paragraph 14 and if Waverley went ahead with major updates of planned Local Plan part 1, the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan would not get the benefit of changes to paragraph 14.

Cllr Ward shared Cllr Cockburn's concerns and complimented Cllrs Cockburn, Beaman and Dickson for their feedback to Waverley.

It was RESOLVED *nem con*:

- 1) Councillors submit their comments to Rachel Aves by 30th January.**
- 2) The Town Clerk submit the Council's response in conjunction with members of the Infrastructure Planning Group.**

Cllr Beaman made the following motion regarding the approach to WBC Local Plan Part 2 Main Modifications Consultation:

"Farnham Town Council is very concerned that Waverley Borough Council is considering a comprehensive update of LPP1 since this will undermine Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan at a critical time with a number of planning applications for residential developments in locations not allocated for development subject to appeal having been refused by Waverley Borough Council and applications for residential developments on other unallocated sites are thought to be being considered.

Farnham Town Council urges Waverley Borough Council to only undertake a minor update required to its existing LPP1 as quickly as possible to help protect Farnham from unwanted and unsustainable speculative development".

Members debated the motion and the impact of any delay to Local Plan Part 1 would have as a result of a full review. There was also concern over unmet housing need from other areas. Suggestions were made for the change of wording to the final motion. After the words '...proposing a full review...' was changed to '...considering comprehensive update...' and '...the minimum that is required...' was changed to '... a minimum update...', there was a unanimous agreement to support the motion.

It was RESOLVED *unanimously* that Farnham Town Council responds to Waverley Borough Council's Local Plan Part 2 Main Modifications consultation via the portal to stress the importance of the adoption of LPP2 as soon as possible. The adoption must be followed by only minor updates of LPP1 to give the Borough an up-to-date Local Plan and protect against speculative development.

v) Draft calendar of events

Council received the draft calendar of meetings for 2023-24 and noted the quarterly meetings for the main Working Groups and ad hoc meetings as required.

Cllr Dickson made a request for a change in time for the Community Enhancement Working Group meetings as some members were unable to attend meetings during the day due to work restraints. Town Clerk responded that there was a trade off as it was difficult to arrange evening meetings due to staffing requirements and commitments, and if there were more evening meetings, there would be fewer staff available during the working day. He confirmed the new Working Groups would review the times at their first meeting.

C89/22 **Precept 2023-24**

Cllr Evans introduced the Precept Report at Appendix advising that the Strategy & Finance Working group had spent considerable time considering options for minimising the budget shortfall's impact on the local community. In 2022-23, the Local Councils sector as a whole received just 1.8% of money raised by Council tax (£655m out of £36.3billion). In recent years, more services had been taken on by the Town and Parish sector from principal authorities as a result of structural change or pressures on finance. In 2022/23 the average Parish increase was 4.1% whilst Farnham was again below average for the tenth successive year at 3.6%. The average council tax precept for town and parish councils was £74.81 against the Farnham level in 2022/23 of £69.76.

The Working Group looked at using reserves and some additional income targets to cushion the inflationary and energy impacts being expected for the year ahead. The Working Group recommendation was for a balanced approach for 2023/24 that was considered prudent, fair and reasonable, supporting local residents at a difficult time minimising the increase to less than a penny a day.

It was resolved *nem con* that:

- 1. An additional income target for the Cemeteries service of £10,000 and targeted staff and agency savings of £20,000 be set and £19,000 of reserves be used to minimise the 2023/24 precept increase;**
- 2. The 2023/24 precept be set at £1,315,900 representing a Band D equivalent amount of £73.21 per annum or £1.41 per week.**

C90/22 **Planning and Licensing Applications**

Members received the minutes of the Planning and Licensing Consultative Group meeting held on 9th and 23rd January 2023 at Appendices F and G noting the continued high volume of work that was being undertaken.

C91/22 **Actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation**

There were no additional actions to be reported.

C92/22 **Reports from Other Councils**

There were no reports from other councils received.

C93/22 **Reports from Outside Bodies**

Cllr Cockburn reported that the Farnham Sports Awards celebration would be taking place on 6th February and paid thanks to the unstoppable enthusiasm of David Gill for his leadership.

Cllr Dickson advised that there was increased number of trucks that had been ignoring the HGV restriction road signs and breaking the law in Farnham North. The Town Clerk informed members that there was currently no law to use ANPR technology locally. Cllr Hesse advised that Waverley CIL had been provided to purchase ANPR cameras and perhaps these could be used.

C94/22 **Date of Next Meeting**

Date of the next meeting was set for Thursday 16th March 2023.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 22:05

Chairman

Date