

FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 11th December 2014

Place

The Council Chamber, South Street, Farnham

Councillors

- * Jeremy Ricketts (Mayor of Farnham)
- * Jill Hargreaves (Deputy Mayor)
- A David Attfield
- * David Beaman
- * Patrick Blagden CBE
- * Carole Cockburn
- * Pat Frost
- A Carlo Genziani
- * Stephen Hill
- * Jennifer O'Grady
- * Stephen O'Grady
- A Sam Hollins-Owen
- * Graham Parlett
- A Dr Jessica Parry
- * Julia Potts
- * Susan Redfern
- * Roger Steel
- * John Ward

- * Present
- A Not present

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)

Rachel Aves (Team Leader Corporate Governance)

13 members of the public were in attendance

Prior to the meeting, prayers were said by Fr Niven Richardson from St Joan of Arc Roman Catholic Church.

Presentation by Steve Forward, Waverley Hoppa Community Transport.

Steve Forward, General Manager of the Waverley Hoppa Community Transport service provided an update on its services particularly as they affected Farnham. Hoppa had been operating for 13 years providing affordable door-to-door wheelchair accessible transport. In 2013/14 there were 58,000 passenger journey in its fleet of 23 minibuses. In Farnham three services operate: door-to-door dial-a-ride, the Coxbridge Flyer, accessible by concessionary fares users; and group travel & Ranger services. Initially Hoppa was 100% funded by grants, but now earned income now represented 78% of Hoppa's funding with dial-a-ride passengers subsidised by grants and other trips,

Mr Forward explained that 32% of dial-a-ride trips took place in Farnham but that there was a huge unmet need. He also explained that the Section 106 funding for the Coxbridge Flyer was due to run out over the next 12-18 months and its future was uncertain.

Cllr Frost said that she was pleased more people were now using Hoppa, and that the Coxbridge Flyer was welcomed by residents at the Chantry.

In response to questions about replacement vehicles, marketing and emissions, Mr Forward confirmed that new vehicles were low emissions to the latest European Standards and that Hoppa had recently been on a marketing campaign to raise its profile.

The Mayor thanked Mr Forward for his interesting update and the valuable service provided by Hoppa.

Questions by the Public

- i) Nick Scales commented on the consultation being undertaken by Surrey County Council on the closure of Care Home across Surrey including Cobgates in Farnham and asked if Farnham Town Council could advise of its response.

Cllr Ward said he understood the feeling and emotions behind the concern that was being expressed and that although Farnham Town Council was not a statutory consultee on the matter it would be discussed later in the agenda.

- ii) Mr Hyman referred to the draft Local Plan and Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan. He was concerned that Farnham's Neighbourhood Plan paid lip service to the Habitats and Air Quality constraints that protect Farnham and asked whether the Council accepted that it had no authority to conduct a consultation that sought residents support for what was clearly an unlawful approach and whether Farnham Town Council accepted that the consultation must therefore be deemed null and void.

In response the Town Clerk advised that the simple answer was 'no', and that the results of the consultation would be considered at the March Council meeting.

C112/14 **Apologies for Absence**
Apologies were received from Councillors Attfield, Genziani, Hollins-Owen, and Parry.

C113/14 **Minutes**

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 23rd October 2014 were agreed for signature by the Mayor as a correct record..

C114/14 Declarations of interests

Apart from the standard declarations of personal interest by councillors who were dual or triple hatted by virtue of being elected to Waverley Borough Council or Surrey County Council, there were the following declarations of interest:

- i) Cllr Potts as a Board member of the Sandy Hill Community Bungalow (Agenda item 6 ii - item 9).
- ii) Cllr Frost as a Trustee of 40 Degreez (Agenda item 6 ii – item 4)
- iii) Cllr Beaman as a concessionary bus user (Agenda item 6 ii – item 10)

C115/14 Statements by the Public

- i) John Price congratulated the Council on the Christmas Lights and on the summer and autumn floral displays. He felt the Council had done very well in making the town look good.

Mr Price felt, however, that the Council was not fighting strongly enough for the Redgrave Theatre and that Waverley Borough Council appeared to be guilty of misrepresentation and Orwellian ‘newspeak’ in its publicity. He did not think the Maltings was the place for modern theatre despite the potential new venture with the UCA for its new degree course.

- ii) David Wylde, representing the Farnham Theatre Association, referred to a letter sent by Andrew Welch to councillors in which he outlined the economic benefits of theatre of independent cinema in Farnham which would be better than that proposed by Crest Nicholson. These ideas should be pursued prior to agreeing to the demolition of the Redgrave Theatre, and Mr Welch had offered to assist in any way he could.
- iii) Jerry Hyman commented that he had been through the draft Neighbourhood Plan to inform his response, The said that the plan was evading the legal constraints by being what the Neighbourhood Plan calls ‘pragmatic’. Mr Hyman said that what Farnham was doing was clearly unlawful and that the results of the current consultation would be meaningless. Farnham should act decisively to scrap the unlawful ‘pragmatic’ approach or be guilty of allowing Farnham’s enviable heritage to be wrecked.
- iv) Alan Earwaker said he had moved into Farnham earlier in the year and was very angry that Waverley Borough Council had taken no notice of Farnham Town Council and councillor objections when they gave themselves planning permission to build the Riverside Car Park. The Waverley officers and councillors said that “work had not started”, but it had been almost been completed. He was concerned that being in the flood plain the area will be flooded again and homes will be at risk.

C116 /14 Town Mayor’s Announcements.

- i) The Mayor advised that the Farnham 2015 Calendar was available to purchase.
- ii) The Mayor encouraged everyone to attend the Christmas Market in Castle Street and the Bush Hotel, complementing the normal Farmers’ Market.

- iii) The Mayor reminded everyone of the Christmas Carol Service with the Farnham Youth Choir in St Andrew's Church on 17th December which had been put on with generous support from Tindle Newspapers Ltd.

C117/14 **Questions by Members**
No questions had been received.

Part I – Items for Decision

C118/14 **Community Enhancement Working Group**
Cllr Hill introduced the notes of the Community Enhancement Working Group, held on 26th November 2014, at Appendix B to the agenda.

Cllr Hill advised Council that Farnham was not in Britain in Bloom for 2015, and the Town Clerk had written on behalf of the Council to South and South East in Bloom expressing disappointment at this surprising decision not to put Farnham forward. He advised that he and the Outside Services Team Leader had been invited by the Royal Horticultural Society to give the Farnham in Bloom presentation to a new judges briefing session.

Cllr Hill advised that the Working Group was keen to get hanging baskets in Castle Street again and was looking at options. The sponsorship target for Farnham in Bloom had again been increased but it was thought to be a realistic level.

Cllr Hill spoke of the success of the Flood Information Drop-in event and thanked Cllr Parry for the hard work she had put in to make it such a success.

The Working Group had reviewed options for a Sustainable Urban Drainage Project and agreed that as a start the Town Council should have additional water butts in the cemeteries and depot for use in Farnham in Bloom.

Cllr Hill advised on the progress in making the allotments self-financing and of the positive meeting held with the Allotment site representatives.

C119/14 **Strategy and Finance Working Group**
Cllr Ward introduced the notes of the Strategy and Finance Working Group meetings held on 2nd December 2014, at Appendix C to the Agenda.

The Working Group had considered the balance of grant funding available and made recommendations although since the meeting the Council had heard that the Rowledge Ice Risk project was no longer going ahead. The working Group was recommending that support for the Farnham Carnival in future be part of the Tourism and Working Group budget in view of the close links with Picnic in the Park.

It was resolved unanimously that:

- 1) **£2000 be granted for the 40 Degreez Double Glazing project.**
- 2) **the annual contribution for the Farnham Carnival be incorporated as a separate budget line under the Tourism and Events budget.**

C120/14 The Working Group had reviewed options for spreading the investment risk and agreed to recommend that a deposit account be opened with Cambridge and Counties Bank. It did not have a Fitch rating as it did not borrow capital but members felt the risk was acceptable being owned by the Cambridgeshire Pension Fund and Trinity Hall, Cambridge.

It was resolved unanimously that:

A deposit account be opened with Cambridge and Counties Bank.

C121/14 Cllr Ward reported on the Pay Settlement (2014-16) achieved by the National Joint Council Negotiating Committee on behalf of employers and that the costs would be absorbed within the staffing budget

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

Farnham Town Council observes the 2014-16 NJC Pay Award.

C122/14 Council heard that the Strategy & Finance Working Group recommendations to bring the allotments costs to a break-even point had been discussed with the Allotment Site representatives who had proposed an alternative solution that would be more appropriate and this was recommended to Council.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) **Allotment rents rise to £50 in 2015 and to £57.50 in 2016;**
- 2) **Officers work with the Allotment Site representatives to seek to generate sponsorship to minimise future increases.**

C123/14 Cllr Ward advised that the Working Group had reviewed fees and charges in a report at Appendix E to its agenda and agreed to recommend that they would be maintained at the same level for 2015-16.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

The proposed Fees and Charges for 2015/16 as set out be agreed.

C124/14 Council noted that the Fire Risk assessment for Wrecchesham Community Centre had been carried out and that a proposed new lease was in preparation.

C125/14 The Strategy & Finance Working Group had received a report from the Offices Working Group proposing the refurbishment of the ground floor public toilets; the re-carpeting of the Council Chamber and corridor and the installation of a drop down projector screen in the Council Chamber; and the refurbishment of the depot to include a new shower, all of which would be funded from existing budgets.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

The programme of works as agreed by the Offices Working Group be progressed from within approved budgets.

Cllr Potts left at this point

C126/14 Cllr Ward reported that the Working Group had a discussion with Matt Smith of First Wessex Housing about more local management of the Bungalow at Sandy Hill and possible synergy if Farnham Town Council employed the manager. The Working Group Council wished to support the Trustees to enable it to employ the manager,

itself and agreed to recommend that during the transition a grant be made towards the employment costs, and advice to support the Trustees be given

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that during the transition:

- 1) The Council supports the Trustees of the Bungalow with a grant toward the cost of employing a manager;**
- 2) The Council offer advice to support the Sandy Hill Bungalow Trustees.**

C127/14 The Working Group had considered the latest Surrey County Council Consultation transportation review and agreed that Cllr Beaman should draft a response in conjunction with the Town Clerk. It was noted that this would go back to Strategy & Finance as the consultation period had been extended.

C128/14 Cllr Ward suggested that the Cobgates consultation should be discussed and representation made.

Cllr Frost commented that individuals could go onto the Surrey website and make their own representations having seen all the background information. She stressed that no decisions had been made and that this was a genuine consultation exercise.

Cllr Beaman was keen that the Council should comment and that options to retain the building as a state-of-the-art venue for the elderly should be considered.

Cllr Cockburn said that the Town Council must put forward its views and be fighting for better conditions and looking after the needs of the elderly. Cllr Hargreaves concurred.

Cllr Ward proposed, seconded by Councillor and

It was RESOLVED unanimously that:

Farnham Town Council supports the retention of Cobgates to become a state-of-the-art facility for the elderly in Farnham.

Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group

C129/14 Cllr Cockburn introduced the notes of the Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group held on 4th November providing an update on the works to the cemetery chapels; the outcome of an appeal; the completion of the cemetery noticeboards project; the next phase of pathway repairs; and an update on the memorial testing programme.

Planning & Licensing Consultative Group

C130/14 Cllr Steel introduced the minutes of the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group meetings held on 26th October, 10th and 24th November, and 8th December 2014.

Cllr Steel referred to support for the Town Council's objections from the Waverley Western Planning Committee in turning down two applications to build in gardens despite officers' recommendations for approval.

In relation to the application to demolish the Redgrave Cllr Steel advised that as the wad councillor he had asked for the application to go to Committee.

Cllr Beaman advised that the letter from Mr Welch had not been available when the matter was discussed by Farnham Town Council and it was proposed by Cllr Beaman,

seconded by Cllr Cockburn that the matter go back to the working group for further consideration:

It was resolved *nem con* that:

Planning application WA/2014/1926 be referred back to the Planning & Licensing Working Group for further consideration.

C131/14 Cllr Ward introduced the draft budget for 2015/16 which had been discussed in detail by the Strategy & Finance Working Group. The Group's proposals recognised that there was a balance to be achieved between continuing to provide quality services for which demand existed, addressing cost pressures and also in ensuring sound finances were maintained for future years. Recognition had also to be given to the significant pressures being faced by the whole community with price rises in most areas of household expenditure, and continuing inflationary pressures. The pressures on budgets had been offset by further action taken during the year to increase fees, charges and sponsorship and continue targeted savings in contracts and by managing staff vacancies. These elements would continue to be a focus in the coming year.

The approach by the Working Group had been to budget for what was needed rather than aim for any particular increase, but it looked as though there would be a slight increase for Band D households. The Working Group proposed maintaining grant expenditure for community organisations; some additional spending being provided for areas such as the Neighbourhood Plan and further extending the Christmas lights initiative to villages and communities; and improved communication with residents.

The detailed budget was attached to the agenda at Appendix G showed expenditure of £1,140,643 and projected income of £1,118,833 and a potential shortfall of £21,810 still to be funded. Council noted that some further work was still to be done on the budget as there were still some items to be confirmed over the Local Council Tax Support Grant which would be discussed at the next Strategy & Finance Working Group.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* to:

Adopt the draft budget set out at Annex 1 to Appendix G

Part 2 – Items Noted

C132/14 **Reports from Other Councils**
There were no reports from other Councils.

C133/14 **Reports from Outside Bodies**

- 1) Cllr Beaman reported on the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership which had its AGM on 7th November. It had taken on extra work recently with the proposed SANG for the Aldershot Urban extension which should help with finances.
- 2) Cllr Attfield reported on the Farnborough Consultative Committee that had received the consultation feedback on the proposed airspace changes.
- 3) Cllr Cockburn provided an update on the Farnham Sports Council and the success of Farnham representatives at the Surrey Sports Awards.
- 4) Cllr Ward reported on the Farnham Public Arts Trust and developments with the Cobbett Statue and the John Henry Knight car sculpture. The Trust was now

actively looking to work with external partners who would look after new commissions.

- 5) Cllr Cockburn advised that the New Ashgate Gallery was looking to do an exhibition to celebrate Sheila Mitchell to coincide with the completion of the Cobbett Statue.

C134/14 **Actions under the Scheme of Delegation**
None reported.

C135/14 **Date of next meeting**
Members noted that the next Council Meeting would take place on Thursday 22nd January 2015 at 7.00pm.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.40pm

Date

Chairman

