



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes
Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 10th December 2015

Place

The Council Chamber, South Street, Farnham

- * Pat Frost (Mayor of Farnham)
- * John Ward (Deputy Mayor)

- * David Attfield
- * Patrick Blagden CBE
- * Carole Cockburn
- * Paula Dunsmore
- * John Scott Fraser
- * Jill Hargreaves
- A Stephen Hill
- * Mike Hodge
- A Sam Hollins-Owen
- * Mike Hyman
- * Andy Macleod
- * Kika Mirylees
- * Julia Potts
- * Susan Redfern
- * Jeremy Ricketts
- * John Williamson

- * Present
- A Apologies for absence

Officers Present:

Iain Lynch (Town Clerk)
Rachel Aves (Team Leader)

There were 14 members of the public in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were said by Revd Canon Anne Gell, Rural Dean of Farnham.

C110/15

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hill and Hollins Owen.

C111/15

Declarations of interests

Apart from 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 no declarations of interest.

C112/15

Minutes

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 29th October 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

C113/15

Questions and Statements by the Public

- i) Mrs Celia Sandars drew attention to the meeting of Waverley Borough Council's Executive on 1st December when the emerging Spatial Strategy was discussed. She had a particular area of concern, namely air quality, and found it shocking that there was no mention of Farnham's traffic problems and the fact that there was to be ten to twenty thousand new homes built on Farnham's boundaries which would add to the air quality problems.

The Leader of the Council responded by saying that this matter would be dealt with through the Strategy & Finance Working Group.

- ii) Mr Mark Mulberry, a parent at St Andrew's Infant School, said there was tremendous anxiety amongst the parents current and new about where the pupils would go to after St Andrews. This was because the previously established route into South Farnham had been eroded because of a breakdown in communication between the diocese and South Farnham education trust, and because of a lack of information from Surrey county council. Parents were worried the school would face closure and this had already caused parents to move their children out to other schools. He said that there would be a meeting between the Diocese and parents the following week.

The Mayor responded by saying this had been a problem for some years but that she would attend the meeting with the Diocese. Cllr Williamson advised that he would also attend as a school governor.

- iii) Mr John Coulson, a parent at St Andrew's, said there had been discussions with the South Farnham Educational Trust, but he felt the bodies appeared to be going their separate ways at the moment.

Mrs Janet Elliot, a parent at St Andrew's, drew attention to the fact that the uncertainty was affecting parents enrolling in January and there needed to be a sustainable route for children attending the school

Cllr Frost advised that there would be a consultation by the Education Authority in January.

- iv) Mr David Beaman stated that Farnham Town Council had a track record of prudent financial management but the budget for next year (2016/17) that was

being considered at the Council meeting showed a projected total expenditure for £1,216,927 which was 4.5% higher than the budget for 2015/16. He noted that this included a supplementary top-up for services that may be stopped by other tiers as a result of Government cuts for them and thought this was a decision that should be applauded. He wondered how many residents would be happy to accept a higher increase eg 10% to save essential services.

In responding to the question, Cllr Ward thanked Mr Beaman for his compliment about the council's prudent financial management and said that although there was an increase in the budget it was still less than the 2014/15 spend. He would deal with the question in more detail in the discussion on the budget and advised that at its January meeting, Council would have to decide how to fund its budgeted expenditure and he would not like to pre-empt Council's decision by an early attempt at apportionment. As a Prudent Council, a sufficient level of reserves needed to be maintained, but part of the budget could be funded from reserves, increased savings from efficiency or by increased Contributions from 3rd parties or fourthly by an increase in the precept. There were a number of government announcements before then which would help inform the best way forward.

- v) Mrs Celia Sandars asked Council to be particularly concerned about the loss of trees in Farnham especially in the conservation area.

C114/15

Town Mayor's Announcements

- i) The Town Mayor advised that she had received many positive compliments about the Christmas lights which had been further extended this year.
- ii) The Mayor reminded Council that the Christmas Market was taking place on Sunday 13th December in Castle Street and the Bush Hotel, with the Farmers' Market in Central Car Park as usual and of the Christmas Carol Service In St Andrew's Church on 15th December.
- iii) The Mayor spoke of her delight in hosting the School Council from Potters Gate School in the Council Chamber, and complimented them on their excellent questions and for being such good ambassadors for their school. She said other schools were welcome to come to the Council Chamber too.
- iv) The Mayor congratulated the Farnham U3a on its 25th anniversary and the Farnham winners who had done so well at the Surrey Sports Awards, and in particular Lily Partridge of Aldershot & Farnham Athletics Club as Sports Personality of the Year, Paul Phillips of Frensham Ponds Sailability as Disability Sports winner, and Verity Snook of Aldershot & Farnham Athletics Club as Coach of the Year.

C115/15

Questions by Members

There were no questions from Members.

Part I – Items for Decision

C116/15

Tourism and Events Working Group

Cllr Hargreaves introduced the notes of the Tourism and Events Working Group meeting held on 10th November 2015, at Appendix B to the Agenda. Councillor Hargreaves drew attention to the debrief of the Food Festival and changes that were being introduced for the Christmas Market to ensure it went smoothly. In particular there were a number of UCA students being employed as elves to help direct people to the different parts of the town where the market was being held.

Cllr Fraser congratulated the Working Group on its successful events and proposed a vote of thanks to the residents of Hale for putting up with the extra traffic when Castle Street was closed. Cllr Hargreaves agreed that everyone in Farnham should be thanked for putting up with traffic.

Cllr Attfield passed on the thanks of the First Farnham Girls Brigade for the lovely Christmas Lights, particularly in South Street.

Cllr Fraser asked why the lights in castle Street were so limited. Cllr Hargreaves explained that Skanska had put limitations on what was allowed on the lampposts but it was hoped to have new Cross-street lights in future subject to listed building consent being obtained.

Cllr Hargreaves advised that the Spring Festival was being held again in 2016, and would be at the end of May when the Andernach StadtOrchester was over to mark the 25th anniversary of the signing of the deed of friendship (in Germany) of Farnham's links with Andernach.

Council noted progress on preparations for the 2 Minute silence centenary event; the 2016 Residents' Guide, and the publication of a new Tree Train and Sculpture Trail.

Community Enhancement Working Group

C117/15 Cllr Cockburn introduced the notes of the Community Enhancement Working Group meeting held on 18th November 2015, at Appendix C to the Agenda. Councillor Cockburn advised that South & South East in Bloom had nominated the Town Council represent the South East in RHS Britain in Bloom in 2016 and that the Working Group had agreed the themes for the 2016 planting.

Cllr Cockburn advised that the Winter Celebration would be taking place in Gostrey Meadow on 21st December and that the Hale Chapels Trust would be organising the Mulled Wine Tent.

C118/15 Cllr Cockburn advised on the discussions that had been held over the bins in the alleyways from Central Car Park but that apart from Boots other businesses had not wished to take advantage of the proposal to create a bin store adjacent to the Bush Hotel (courtesy of the Bush Hotel, subject to a small annual fee).

Cllr Ward said this matter had gone on far too long and strong action was now needed. This was one of the main walkways into the Town and its state was in stark contrast to, and degraded from, the efforts to keep the Town tidy and the work put into Farnham in Bloom and the Christmas Lights. Cllr Williamson asked who needed to progress this matter, and was advised by Cllr Ward that the legislative responsibility rested with Waverley Borough Council. Cllr Cockburn supported the approach totally and that the bins had to go particularly in the conservation area. Cllr Potts agreed as the matter had gone on for several years and the Town Council had done as much as it could to facilitate a reasonable solution.

Cllr Ward proposed, seconded by Cllr Cockburn and **RESOLVED unanimously** that:

“Farnham Town Council deplores the long-running, untidy and dirty state of the Passageway from the Central Carpark to the Borough, where businesses persistently leave their overflowing bins.

Council is pleased that Boots are prepared to help tackle this situation but is surprised and disappointed by the antipathy of the other businesses as reported in the Community Enhancement Working Group Notes. Council is concerned that these Bins, as well as being unsightly and a nuisance to pedestrians, now represent a health hazard.

Farnham Town Council should approach Waverley Borough Council requesting a bye-law dealing with bins in all the town's alleyways and walkways and make all efforts, including recourse to law, to have these bins removed within the next 6 months."

C119/15

Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group

Cllr Cockburn introduced the notes of the Cemeteries and Appeals Working Group meeting held on 19th November 2015, at Appendix D to the Agenda. Councillor Cockburn reported that the Working group had reviewed the Cemetery Regulations, following the tour of nearby cemeteries in August, in order to resolve anomalies.

It was proposed i) that a small portion of the grave space (18 inches or 45 centimetres) should be offered to the bereaved which they could be planted up and used to place commemorative items; ii) that one cemetery (Badshot Lea) be allocated as a cemetery where kerbed surrounds could be allowed to give choice to those bereaved families that wanted them; that a new wildflower area be created in West Street Cemetery adjacent to the cemetery wall behind the chapel; spoil in the cemeteries be removed or discreetly placed; that Badshot Lea be entered in the 2016 cemeteries category of South and South East in Bloom in order to be peer assessed for future improvements. It was agreed to recommend that apart from genealogy fees, the remaining fees be kept at the same level.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

1) the following policy be adopted:

"Purchasers of graves will be permitted to plant the area of the grave to a maximum of 18 inches from the head of the grave and will be responsible for its upkeep. The cutting back or removal of any plants, trees or other vegetation and or undergrowth beyond the ground immediately above any particular grave is not permitted unless the prior written permission of the Town Clerk or an authorised member of Council staff has been obtained.

No person will be permitted to cultivate any ground that is outside of the designated planting area. Any plants or other objects outside of the designated area of the grave will be removed without notice. The Council reserves the right at any time to prune, cut down or dig up and remove any existing shrub, tree or plant at any time which becomes unsightly or overgrown or causes encroachment. Before removing any shrub, tree or plant, the Town Council will remind the grave owner of their responsibilities.

- 2) Officers be delegated to implement the above policy in accordance with other relevant policies.**
- 3) The regulations be amended, to permit kerb surrounds in Badshot Lea Cemetery from 1st April 2016 and that:**

- i. **The style and design of kerbed memorial be subject to the previously adopted NAMM specification guide.**
 - ii. **An additional fee for a permit memorial for kerbs of £300 be introduced.**
 - iii. **Grave owners who purchased graves prior to adoption of the new regulations, be offered the opportunity to apply for a kerb surround for a fee of £150.**
- 4) **The fees and charges, except for hourly genealogy charge, be maintained for 2016/17 and that the hourly rate for genealogy be increased from £10 to £20.**

Strategy and Finance Working Group

C120/15

Cllr Ward introduced the notes of the Strategy and Finance Working Group meeting held on 1st December 2015, at Appendix E to the Agenda.

Cllr Ward deferred to the detailed budget that was being considered at a later item on the Council agenda. The Working Group had reviewed fees and charges and had a number of recommendations to Council in addition to those agreed for Cemeteries.

It was proposed to maintain the fee for the Farmers' market at the same level but increase the fee for equipment hire. In relation to the hire of the council offices it was proposed to increase the rates for the use of the buildings but give discretion to the Town Clerk for use of the building by community groups if the additional staff time involved was minimal.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) **the Farmers' Market pitch fee remains unchanged for 2016/17, at £35;**
- 2) **the fee for the hire of a gazebo be increased to £15 plus VAT;**
- 3) **the sponsorship levels proposed by the Community Enhancement Working Group be agreed with the Town Clerk having discretion to negotiate appropriate packages;**
- 4) **the income Target for Farnham in Bloom in 2016/17 be set at £20,000.**
- 5) **subject to discussion at its January meeting, that the provisional income target for Tourism and Events be £31,500;**
- 6) **the Town Clerk determine the appropriate fees and charges to be included in the sponsorship brochure; and**
- 7) **the rates for use of the Council Offices be £30 per hour for commercial groups and £20 for community groups but that the Town Clerk should have discretion to waive or discount the fees if the additional staff time involved was minimal.**

C121/15

Cllr Ward advised that the Working Group had received a report of a meeting with Farnham's Philanthropic grant giving organisations and the proposal to jointly fund a new Hoppa bus for Farnham as part of the fleet renewal. Further discussion would take place at the January meeting of Strategy & Finance.

C122/15

Cllr Ward reported on a number of contracts that had been considered by the Working Group. Members had considered the need to deal with a leak on the West Street Chapel roof which had not been part of the refurbishment contract. There were some flashing and coping stone repairs required and further advice was being sought.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

The Town Clerk be authorised to progress the repairs to the West Street Chapel Roof up to a maximum of £10,000 with the costs met from the cemetery earmarked reserves.

C123/15

Cllr Ward advised that the Working Groups had completed their review of risks associated with their Working Groups, and that Strategy & Finance had reviewed its own along with those considered by other Working Groups. The Working Group agreed a number of areas where the risk profile had reduced as a result of work undertaken or experience in recent years. Copies of the report had also been circulated to all councillors. Strategy & Finance had also considered the report on Risk Assessment Management and Health and Safety by its Risk Management and health and safety advisors Ellis Whittam noting that there were no items needing immediate attention after the date of the fixed electrical testing had been clarified.

After noting that councillor volunteers as Fire Marshalls and Evac Chair helpers were required,

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- 1) the individual risk assessments undertaken by each Working Group and the amendments agreed;
- 2) the annual risk assessment report with the Action Plan arising out of the General Risk Assessment contained in Annex 2 be approved;
- 3) the Health & Safety Policy (Annex 3) Environmental Policy (Annex 4), the Fire Safety Management Policy (Annex 5) be readopted by Council; and

C124/15

Cllr Cockburn provided an update on the work of the Infrastructure Planning Group referring to a discussion with a Neighbourhood Planning Examiner who had been invited to a joint meeting with Waverley Borough Council to discuss, amongst other things how the question of SANGs (suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) should be dealt with in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Council noted that a new Waverley Spatial Strategy was being considered and that although a Farnham response had not been invited, the Town Council should provide its observations.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that: the Town Clerk writes to Waverley Borough Council having consulted the Infrastructure Planning Group with observations from Farnham on the Borough Council's emerging Spatial Strategy.

C125/15

Cllr Ward advised Council of the new guidance note issued by the National Association of Local Councils as a result of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 which required a change to Financial Regulations to reflect the fact that contracts over £25,000 must be advertised on the contract finder website.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

Financial Regulation 11 2d be amended to include "iii) In compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, the Council shall advertise all contracts with an estimated value over £25,000 on the Contract Finder website (www.gov.uk/contracts-finder) and in other relevant places."

Planning & Licensing Consultative Group

C126/15 Cllr Ward introduced the minutes of the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group held on 2nd, 16th and 30th November at Appendices F, G and H to the agenda.

Budget 2016/17

C127/15 Cllr Ward introduced the budget report attached at Appendix I. He advised that there were three principal sources of income to fund the Budget: the precept (usually known as Council Tax), use of Reserves, and Income from other third parties such as allotments, market & event stall-holders, burials and other charges. The amount to be paid by residents was constantly in the Council's mind, although the actual level would be agreed in January.

The budget had been closely scrutinised by the Strategy & Finance Working Group and it was recommended that FTC's expenditure budget for 2016/17 be agreed at £1,216,927 with proposed Income of £203,500 leaving a net Budget of £1,013,427.

Cllr Ward drew attention to the difficulties in putting together budget with the possibly swinging cuts being made to the budgets of principal authorities. Should the Council just accept the reduction in services or do try to take-up or fill-in some of these to keep Farnham in the condition that residents expect? The latter would obviously demand an increase in expenditure. Overall, the recommended Budget is less than the actual spend in 2014/15 of £1,302,368.

Cllr Ward took Council through the budget in detail highlighting that the proposed increases were to help fund services that Principal authorities might find difficult to continue (as yet unknown); for special events such as the centenary of the first two minute's silence that originated in Farnham; the costs for the Inspection of the Neighbourhood Plan; and public toilet improvements. The budget was supplemented by an annex containing detailed notes.

**It was RESOLVED unanimously by show of hands, subject to discussion at the Tourism and Events Working Group on its budget, that:
Farnham Town Council's expenditure budget for 2016/17 be agreed at £1,216,927 with proposed income of £203,500 leading to a net budget of £1,013,427.**

Part 2 – Items Noted

C128/15 Reports from Other Councils

- i) Cllr Frost reported that there would be a new transport review undertaken in January by Surrey County Council
- ii) The Town Clerk advised that Farnham Town Council was still in dialogue with Alton Town Council on the 65 bus review and that there would be a survey, undertaken in the new year, which had been drawn up by Alton in conjunction with Bentley and Farnham.

C129/15 Reports from Outside Bodies

- i) Cllr Hodge reported he had attended the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership AGM. In the Farnham area BVCP's main work had been on the restoration work at the Farnham Quarry. A lot of work had been carried out by volunteers on vegetation removal and ditch clearance. Rangers had also worked on roadside landscaping around Shepherd and Flock roundabout. Cllr

Hodge reported that there was also a new grant funding scheme which may be of interest to Farnham's conservation groups. The Partnership had specifically asked that their thanks be passed on to Farnham Town Council for the £1500 grant.

- ii) Cllr Cockburn reported on a meeting at the Gostrey Centre and the clash between what the Gostrey Centre wished to deliver and the fact that Waverley wanted to make money out of the Memorial Hall. The intention had been that the Gostrey Centre would fundraise to equip the new kitchen, but if it were to be available for everyone to hire this was a different situation. There was also a lot of negotiation going on over the room layout to find a suitable solution. Cllr Potts advised there were still a lot of unknowns and there had been some changes to plans and wished to reassure Council that there would be a further meeting to bring clarity.
- iii) Cllr Fraser said he had listened carefully to what had been said but had heard nothing about what would happen to the Royal Voluntary Service Meals on Wheels with the move. The Mayor said that this was a matter best taken up with Waverley Borough Council who had responsibility for resolving the matter. The Town Clerk advised that the Wellbeing Task Group had raised concerns over this and would be discussing it at its next meeting.
- iv) Cllr Hargreaves said that she had attended the Farnham Visitors' Forum who had met recently to consider how it could evolve its role to meet the needs of businesses, residents and visitors.
- v) Cllr Fraser reported that he had attended the Hale Recreation Ground Management Committee. They thanked Waverley for replacing the concrete and steel fencing with timber posts and rails.
- vi) Cllr Fraser said he had also attended the Farnborough Airfield Consultative Committee. Nothing was happening in 2016 and the airspace proposals had been referred back to consultants.
- vii) Cllr Cockburn updated Council on the Farnham Conservation Area Management Plan discussions with Robert Dyas and the joint approach to improve the important entrance to the town from Central Car Park.

C130/15 Actions under the Scheme of Delegation

The Town Clerk reported that he was to write to Waverley Borough Council following the discussions at Strategy & Finance to accept the transfer of a piece of land adjacent to the Gostrey Meadow Toilets to facilitate the toilet improvement project.

C131/15 Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next Council Meeting would take place on Thursday 21st January 2016.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.35pm

Date

Chairman