



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00pm on 21st January 2016

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
- * Stephen Hill
- * Mike Hodge
- * Sam Hollins-Owen
- * Mike Hyman
- * Andy Macleod
- A Kika Mirylees
- * Julia Potts
- A Susan Redfern
- * Jeremy Ricketts
- * John Williamson

- * Present
- A Apologies for absence

Officers Present:

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

There were 3 members of the public in attendance.

Prior to the meeting, prayers were said by Pastor Michael Hall of the Farnham Pentecostal Church.

C132/15

Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Mirylees and Redfern

C133/15

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, Cllr Cockburn said that she was a Trustee of Woodlarks (in relation to the items on grants). The Town Clerk advised that in relation to the other grants there would be no need to make individual declarations if the proposals before Council were taken *en bloc*.

C134/15

Minutes

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 1st December 2015 were agreed and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

C135/15

Questions and Statements by the Public

The Mayor agreed that Cllr Williamson could read a question from one of his constituents who was unable to attend personally because of family illness. Mrs Janet Taylor, a parent at St Andrew's School, was happy that the consultation on closure of the school by Surrey County Council(SCC) had been withdrawn, and was glad of the support of Jeremy Hunt MP in the run up to this decision. Mrs Taylor asked that the Mayor Pat Frost and all other members of the town council did all that they could to get SCC to ensure viable funding is provided to keep St Andrew's open for the good of current and future parents and children as it was needed as a local school for town centre children. She requested updates on what was done to ensure this outcome.

In response, the Mayor advised that in her other role as a county councillor she was working to ensure there could be extra funding from the diocese. She was grateful that the Diocese had found additional funding this year and would continue to work hard to find a solution. The main problem was that there were not enough children wanting to go to St Andrew's and an excess of places.

Cllr Williamson advised that he was a governor at the school and would contact Mrs Taylor.

C136/15

Town Mayor's Announcements

- i) The Mayor read a letter from Mr Alan Gavaghan, Chairman of the Farnham Society, (attached as Annex I to the minutes) complimenting the Council for the Christmas Lights and other projects which improve the quality of life in Farnham.
- ii) The Mayor reported with sadness that Mr Colin Skingle had passed away. Mr Skingle had been a regular attendee in the public gallery and at Town Council events. The Mayor would write to Mrs Skingle to pass on the Council's condolences and thanks for the contribution he had made to the work of the Council.
- iii) The Mayor announced that the Mayor's Coffee mornings were being arranged with groupings of three wards together.
- iv) The Mayor advised that Surrey County Council were undertaking a further Bus review which would affect Farnham and encouraged everyone to respond.

C137/15

Questions by Members

There were no questions from Members.

Part I – Items for Decision

Tourism and Events Working Group

C138/15 Cllr Hargreaves introduced the notes of the Tourism and Events Working Group meeting held on 6th January 2016, at Appendix B to the Agenda. Council noted that the Working Group had reviewed the proposed tourism and events income and expenditure budgets set for 2016/17 and agreed some cost allocations within the agreed budgets.

C139/15 Cllr Hargreaves said that the Working Group had reviewed the Christmas Lights Switch-on, the installation of Christmas lights and the Christmas Market. A number of suggestions to make Farnham and its events more festive had been agreed to be taken forward in 2016. Work was also underway on rebranding the Farmers' Markets.

Cllr Hargreaves thanked all councillors for their help at events which was greatly appreciated.

Strategy and Finance Working Group

C140/15 Cllr Ward introduced the notes of the Strategy and Finance Working Group meeting held on 12th January 2016, at Appendix C to the Agenda.

Council noted that the Working Group had reviewed the Internal Auditor's interim report alongside officers' comments and the revised safeguards on salary and banking checks. Council also noted that the Reserves had been reviewed in detail as part of the proposals for the precept recommendations which would be considered as a separate item on the Council agenda.

C141/15 Cllr Attfield introduced the Grants Report at Annex I to Appendix D. He explained that the Working Group had sought to balance the budget with competing requests and the reasons why each applicant wanted the funding. He proposed that the recommendations should be taken together and this was agreed. Council noted that once the Service Level Agreements for the Maltings, 40 Degreez and the CAB had been accounted for, the applications totalled £45,451 for the balance of £22,000 available. It was agreed to recommend to Council grants to the value of £21,157 with the remaining £843 available for the deferred application from the Hale Recreation Ground Committee.

On a show of hands, it was **RESOLVED** unanimously that:

- i) **The proposed grants set out at Annex I be agreed with the grant for the Hoppa Community Transport dial-a-ride service being funded additionally from the Community Initiatives fund;**
- ii) **Hoppa be considered to be an SLA organisation in the review of the scheme in 2016; and**
- iii) **A grant of £5,000 be awarded towards the cost of a replacement Hoppa bus for Farnham with up to a further £5,000 available to match fund contributions from other Farnham organisations if the target of £30,000 is reached.**

C142/15 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 the report from the

NPIERS (Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service) examiner was still in draft form as there were points that required clarification before the report was finalised. In particular, the report had suggested that the Neighbourhood Plan may be able to move forward and rely on Waverley BC to provide SANGs (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) to support to the Neighbourhood Plan housing allocations but Council noted that there was a divergence of opinion and that this approach would need to be endorsed by Natural England.

Cllr Cockburn advised that there were a series of ward-based workshops being held on 6th February to look at the design briefs for individual sites and councillors would receive specific invitations.

The Stakeholder Workshop held recently had attracted around fifty participants and it had been a very useful question and answer session.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

Officers and IPG should liaise further with the NPIERS examiner Natural England and WBC, to agree a way forward and revise the timetable for the NP accordingly, with a view to submission of the Neighbourhood Plan as soon as possible.

C143/15 Cllr Ward advised on progress on a number of contracts as set out in the notes of the Working Group including the fencing project at Wrecclesham Community Centre, CCTV at Victoria Gardens, the new photocopier contract and the works to the depot and the disabled toilets in the Council Offices. Council noted that the relaying of the paving stones around the war memorial was awaiting the outcome of a grant application.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

- i) CCTV be installed to cover Victoria Gardens at a cost of £3,070 with the costs met from the CCTV budget;**
- ii) A new three year photocopier contract be taken out with Kent County Supplies.**

C144/15 Council received the draft programme of meeting dates for 2016/17, some of which were to be finalised.

Community Enhancement Working Group

C145/15 Cllr Hill introduced the notes of the Community Enhancement Working Group meeting held on 13th January 2016 at Appendix C to the agenda.

Cllr Hill advised that the Farnham in Bloom Community Group and the Community Enhancement Working Group were progressing plans for 2016 with a number of initiatives. One was the new *Bloomin' litter* project to recognise the volunteers who regularly picked litter in their local areas and communities. They would be offered hi-vis jackets and litter pickers to raise the profile of what they were doing and be supported by the community group.

C146/15 Cllr Hill reported on discussions that had taken place between Waverley and Farnham Town Council on resolving the issue of unsightly bins obstructing the alleyways from car parks and the litter and health hazards that resulted. As well as considering the implementation of a bylaw, Waverley were investigating other legislative options to resolve the problem which was not unique to Farnham.

Cllr Cockburn said she was shocked to learn that there was no policy for commercial waste in Waverley that covered bins. The town was looking awful and she was not happy with the level of street cleaning. She wondered what was the point of having initiatives to bring people to Farnham if what they found was a dirty, litter-strewn access from the car parks. The problem with bins was something relatively new, and shops and businesses were flourishing before they arrived so more effort should be made for them to be put somewhere else. Cllr Williamson agreed and felt legal action might be required. Cllr Ward suggested that the names of businesses should be put on the bins so that the public could know who was responsible for the obstruction and litter.

Cllr Attfield reminded Council that this was not a problem confined to the Town Centre and there were similar issues in communities around the town.

Planning & Licensing Consultative Group

C147/15 Cllr Ward introduced the minutes of the Planning & Licensing Consultative Group held on 21st December and 11th January at Appendices E and F to the agenda.

Cllr Ward said that members were concerned about the number of Planning Inspectorate appeals that were being allowed due to the lack of five year housing land supply in Waverley. It was agreed that the Town Council should send its concerns to Waverley Borough Council to encourage the identification of the Five Year Housing Land Supply and that these comments should be incorporated in its response to the spatial strategy.

It was RESOLVED *nem con* that:

The Town Clerk write to Waverley Borough Council to encourage the identification of the Five Year Housing Land Supply.

C148/15 Cllr Fraser noted there were twelve separate applications for felling or lopping trees and requested that the Council's concerns over this matter be separately drawn to the attention of Waverley. The Town Clerk advised that he had just written to Waverley on this point.

C149/15 Cllr Cockburn raised concerns over bills going through parliament that would relax planning rules in favour of residential development and allow changes to any building including shops and agricultural buildings. These proposals were an extra threat to the integrity of the high street.

Precept 2016/17

C150/15 Cllr Ward introduced the precept report attached at Appendix G which set out in detail the reasons for the Strategy & Finance Working Groups unanimous recommendation for the 2016/17 precept. Principal authorities were facing huge reductions in their government grants and some provision had been made to top of local services to make town as nice as possible for residents. In addition, funding was allocated to support Community Transport provision in the light of reductions elsewhere.

Cllr Ward reminded Council that in determining the level of precept Council should consider whether it wished to:

- 1) use any of its reserves;
- 2) increase further the income targets for services;
- 3) set unallocated in-year savings targets; or

4) fund the agreed budget with an increase in the precept.

In coming to its recommendation, Cllr Ward said that the Strategy & Finance Working Group had looked carefully at the level of reserves to see whether it should support the budget but agreed unanimously not to use reserves as they were at the right level for the proposed activity and the recommendation was for a four pence per week increase for a typical Band D household.

Cllr Williamson said that increasing the price of anything is difficult when it affects people but all agreed that to use reserves to fund a deficit was the road to disaster. The Council had identified a number of areas that needed assistance and he supported the proposal.

**It was RESOLVED unanimously that:
The precept for 2016/17 should be £1,011,182 equating to a Band D cost of £59.83 per annum (£1.15 per week).**

Part 2 – Items Noted

CI51/15 Actions under the Scheme of Delegation

There were no actions to report.

Reports from Other Councils

- CI52/15
- i) Cllr Potts advised that small businesses were being invited by Waverley to discuss the 2016/17 budget and business rates at a meeting on Tuesday 23rd February at 8am.
 - ii) Cllr Potts advised that the contractual issues over pay by phone parking were being resolved and it was hoped the system would be available again in the next six weeks.

CI53/15 Reports from Outside Bodies

- i) Cllr Potts reported that the Farnham Maltings was progressing well and that the Farnham Museum was in the final stages of being reaccredited which was good as it was an important facility for the town.
- ii) Cllr Ricketts reported that the Crime Prevention Panel continued to do good work but was seeking someone with IT skills who could help with some aspects of its work.

CI54/15 Exclusion of Press and Public.

**It was RESOLVED *nem con* to:
exclude members of the public and press from the meeting at Part 3, of the agenda in view of the confidential items under discussion.**

Part 3 – Confidential Items

CI55/15 Council endorsed the proposed recipients for the Services to Farnham Awards, which would be presented at a special ceremony on 22nd February.

CI56/15 Date of next meeting

Members noted that the next Council Meeting would take place on Thursday 10th March 2016.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8pm.

Date

Chairman