



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Full Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 18 September 2008

Place

The Council Chamber, South Street, Farnham

Members Present

- * Cllr G M Beel (Town Mayor) Chairman
- * Cllr L Fleming (Deputy Town Mayor) Vice Chairman
- * Cllr D Attfield
- o Cllr C Cockburn
- o Cllr V Duckett
- o Cllr (Mrs) P Frost
- o Cllr R Frost
- * Cllr C Genziani
- * Cllr G Hargreaves
- * Cllr S Hill
- o Cllr D Le Gal
- o Cllr A Lovell
- o Cllr J Maines
- * Cllr S O'Grady
- * Cllr R Steel
- * Cllr C Storey
- * Cllr A Thorp
- * Cllr J Ward

- * Present
- o Apologies for absence

Officers Present:

Roland Potter (Town Clerk)
Wendy Coulter (Committee and Members Services Co-ordinator)
Kevin Taitt (Grounds and Services Manager)
Catherine Cooper (Major Projects Co-ordinator)
Ginny Gordon (Receptionist/Farmers' Market Co-ordinator)

C 053/08 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

There were no questions by the public.

C 054/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, V Duckett, (Mrs) P Frost, B Frost, D Le Gal, A Lovell, J Maines

C 055/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council meetings held on 19 June 2008 and 26 June 2008 were signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

C 056/08 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest received for any items on the agenda.

C 057/08 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Skingle made a statement, congratulating the Town Council, Mr Taitt's Outside Workforce team and the Councillors on achieving a Gold award and being the Regional Winner in the South and South East in Bloom Competition.

C 058/08 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor congratulated Farnham Town Council, its Officers, Outside Workforce Team, Councillors, Volunteers, Businesses and Partners on the success in the South and South East in Bloom Competition.

The Town Mayor attended the Heritage Weekend which was a delight. She expressed her thanks to the Farnham Society and Ms Rayner for the wonderful work that had been done to make it such an enjoyable event.

The Town Mayor reminded Members that the Remembrance Sunday Service would be held on 9 November 2008.

The Town Mayor also reminded Members that there would be a presentation by Farnham Town Council to the Farnham Chamber of Commerce at the Bush Hotel on Thursday 25 September at 6pm.

Part 1 – Items for Decision

C059/08 RESULTS OF SOUTH AND SOUTH EAST IN BLOOM JUDGING

It was reported to Members that Farnham Town Council had achieved a Gold award in South and South East in Bloom and was also Regional Winners.

Councillor Hargreaves, Chairman of the Farnham in Bloom Group congratulated Mr Taitt and Ms Rayner, their team and all the sponsors and partners who had worked so hard to achieve the success.

Councillor Steel congratulated Councillor Hargreaves on her leadership of the group and her determination and enthusiasm which encouraged all involved.

Mr Taitt explained that as Farnham Town had won the Regional category then it may be possible that Farnham would be put forward for entry in to the Britain in Bloom in 2009 competition.

C 060/08 MAJOR EVENTS FOR THE PROMOTION OF FARNHAM

Progress of Events for 2008

Members received a report on the progress of Events in 2008.

Band Concerts

Members noted the success of the Band Concerts in Gostrey Meadow and the results of the questionnaire (attached to record minutes).

Food Festival

It was noted that the Food Festival would be held on Saturday 11 October in the Central Car Park between 10am – 4pm. 34 stalls of regional producers and Farnham retailers would be attending the Festival to sell their products. There would also be a demonstration by local Chef, Steve Drake of Michelin Star establishment; Drake's Restaurant in Ripley. Face painting would be provided for children. Radio Eagle's 'Love Crew' would be attending on the day from 11.00 – 14.00. Entertainment would be provided by Grandpa Spells Jazz Band from 14.00 – 16.00.

Members noted that the Italian Market would be taking place on 24 October 2008 and had originally been arranged to be held in Castle Street, but due to complications with street trading laws the Market would now be held in Central Car Park.

The Farmers' Market which to be held on 26 October 2008 would also be included in the event.

Members noted that the Town Council had attempted to involve the local businesses in the Food Festival, 110 letters had been sent out to local businesses however only thirteen had replied. The Chamber of Commerce had originally shown an interest in being involved in the event but were unable to supply a stall as insufficient numbers of Chamber Members were involved in the Festival.

Christmas

Members noted that planning was underway for Christmas and Young Person of the Year. The 'Christmas Lights Switch On' would be held in East Street on Saturday 22 November 2008. However Members noted that in 2009 the event would be relocated to Gostrey Meadow.

Quotes had been received from Radio Eagle and Delta Radio regarding participation in the festivities for 2008.

Members discussed the quotes from both Radio Stations and requested that Eagle Radio be contacted again the renegotiate the quote as this would be the preferable Radio Station.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ **That the Events planned for the remainder of 2008 be noted**
- ◆ **That Officers renegotiate terms for the inclusion of Radio Eagle in the Town Council's activities for Christmas.**

Proposal for Events for 2009

Members received a report on the proposed list of events for 2009, and the locations of road closures, where required.

Spring

Members noted that 3 Continental Markets have been scheduled for 2009. The first is scheduled for Easter Weekend; this will replace the Council's Easter Extravaganza event.

The Spring Festival Craft Market would be repeated for 2009, taking into account points raised and lessons learnt from the first market held in 2008.

The Spring Festival Craft Market would be again held in Downing Street, subject to permissions from Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

Summer

11 Band Concerts have been scheduled for 2009. The concerts have been provisionally scheduled for the first 3 weeks in June, July, August and September. With the Farmers' Market this will create an event for local residents every weekend from June to September. Opportunities for sponsorship will be investigated with local businesses.

Members noted that a new event would be planned for Summer 2009, the Gardening festival. This would be a finale to the South and South East in Bloom Competition, Farnham in Bloom and the Secret Gardens. The Festival will be located at the Maltings and will include the Allotment Competition.

Autumn

The Farnham Feast of Food would be developed further in September 2009. The event would be moved forward by two weeks to coincide with British Food fortnight and involve harvest festivals.

Members noted that the location of the Food Festival would require a road closure and would be expected to take place in West Street from the junction of Downing Street along West Street to The Hart.

Winter

Discussions had been held between Officers and the Maltings and it was agreed that the current date for the Christmas Lights Switch on was too early. Most towns schedule their switch on dates for the 1st December.

As the local schools are a vital part of the Switch On and Saturday is the easiest day for children and other partners to participate so the event will be scheduled for the Saturday nearest 1st December. In 2009 that will be Saturday 28 November and the Christmas Switch On will take place in Gostrey Meadow.

RESOLVED: To approve the schedule of events for 2009 – attached to record minutes, with locations.

Farnham Town Guide

Members received a report on the current status of the Town Guide and a proposal for a combined Events Guide from the Farnham Maltings.

2009 Town Guide

Members noted that the company who had printed the 2008 Town Guide had gone out of business and therefore 4 local companies had been consulted for quotes to re-design and print the 2009 Town Guide.

It was noted that there had been concerns by advertisers about the lack of distribution.

The preferred company was Starfish, a Portsmouth based company which had worked on guides for a number of other local authorities.

Starfish produced three designs for the guide which was considered by a panel of Members including Councillors Fleming, Hargreaves, LeGal and Hill. The Councillors raised a number of issues which had been raised with the company.

Members noted that the next stage for the Guide was to provide Starfish with information about specifics for the guide, for example the planned distribution with Take One Media; this would allow a rate card to be designed and distributed to potential advertisers.

Farnham Events Guide

Members noted that the Town Council's Officers had identified a need for a general Farnham Events Guide. Officers had discussed this demand with the Farnham Maltings who suggested that that their existing events guide (which is distributed 3 times a year) be redesigned to a Town Events Guide.

Members received the financial information regarding the Maltings proposal and noted that the initial costs had been identified as being between £6k and £12k depending on the circulation.

Members discussed the financial implications and requested that Officers investigate the possibility of the Town Council producing its own Town Events Guide.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ **That the progress of the development of the 2009 Town Guide be noted.**
- ◆ **That negotiations with the Maltings to develop a shared calendar and Events Guide be deferred.**
- ◆ **Officers investigate the possibility of the Town Council producing its own Town Events Guide for 2009.**

C 060/08 CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS – LIGHT EMITTING DIODE (LED) BULBS

Members were asked to consider a report on the Christmas Lights and the replacement of traditional tungsten bulbs for Light Emitting Diode (LED) Bulbs.

It was explained that the majority of the current Christmas Decorations are fitted with tungsten bulbs. The tungsten bulbs are costly to run and the retailers of the town provide the power for the Christmas Lights, free of charge.

Energy costs are rising and the LED bulbs run on approximately 80-90% less power than tungsten and will therefore cost less to run.

Currently when the tungsten bulbs fail they are very visible. The LED bulbs are smaller so are less visible when they fail.

Members noted that as a result of the rising cost of power the benefit of exchanging tungsten bulbs with LED bulbs would reduce the cost of providing the power to the retailers and improve the effectiveness of the decorations.

The additional cost of replacing tungsten bulbs with LED bulbs would be £2,278.12 and it was noted that the funds could be identified from potential savings within the current budget or a sum of up to £2,278.12 could be allocated from General Reserves.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the replacement of tungsten bulbs with LED bulbs for the Christmas Lights be approved.**
- 2. That the cost of the replacement LED bulbs be met either from potential savings within the current budget of a sum of up to £2,278.12 be allocated from reserves.**

C 061/08 CEMETERIES REVIEW

The Town Clerk thanked the Cemeteries Working Group for their help and support during the work on the Cemeteries Project and Review.

The Town Clerk explained the outcomes of the Cemeteries Review and raised the following points.

Farnham Town Council Cemetery Service - The Farnham Town Council Cemeteries Service would be renamed the Farnham Town Council Bereavement Services.

The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Excellence Criteria would be used as a benchmark to monitor the improvement of the Bereavement Service.

The Town Clerk informed Members that the Bereavement Service would now be operated from 9am to 4.30pm every weekday as apposed to 9am to 1pm as had been previously.

The internal Management had been changed to reflect the needs of the service. All staff in the downstairs office had been trained to deal with enquiries regarding cemeteries. The staff were also able of carryout the full function of the service should any problems arise.

The Management of the service had been restructured to ensure that the Council had a strategy to provide business continuity. The management of the cemeteries would report to a Cemeteries Management Team. The core administrative and legal management behind the service is led by Miss Coulter and Mr Taitt for the delivery of outside services.

Mr Taitt, Miss Coulter and the Town Clerk would complete further more advanced training in Cemeteries functions and services.

From 4 January 2009 undertakers would be able to provisionally book funerals online via computer or 3G mobile phone without having to contact the Town Council Office.

The Town Clerk also informed Members that the new Bereavement Service structure and Management plan would allow the Management Team to operate the Bereavement Service remotely from any location.

Grass Cutting - The Town Clerk reiterated that Farnham Town Council cemeteries cover over 100 acres which require a regular schedule of grass cutting. Only three full time staff are employed to cut the grass. In 2008 they had been supported by two extra staff on a temporary basis. A new grass cutting schedule had been implemented for the next 18 months. The grass cutting programme had been changed and the grass would be cut all year round.

One section of West Street Cemetery (Section C) would be set aside and left as a Wild Garden only being cut twice a year. Members were looking at building a Garden of Remembrance in West Street.

Certain areas of grass in the Cemeteries would be cut to different levels which would give a different look to the cemeteries and there will also be more planting.

Cemetery Buildings – Farnham Town Council had been in discussions with the Listed buildings Officer from Waverley Borough Council, who had given advice on the repair and maintenance of the Cemetery Chapels. Farnham Town Council was looking a programme of repair works for the Chapel at West Street which is a Grade II Listed Building. The correct company was needed to carry out the repair work as the building had suffered from inappropriate repair works in the past.

The use of the chapel buildings was under review and the possibility of bringing them back into use as part of the Cemeteries function was being considered where possible. A number of business plans would be put together to consider the use of the buildings.

Responsible Officer for Cemeteries – The Town Clerk informed Members that a specific Power was delegated to the Town Clerk in order to operate the Cemeteries on a day to day basis. However, when the Town Clerk is away, that power would need to be delegated to someone else.

The Town Clerk asked Members to consider delegating this Power automatically to Mr Taitt and Miss Coulter in the Town Clerks absence. Although it had not happened to date, there would be certain types of funerals which would need to be carried out within twenty four hours.

Customer Service – Surveys would be carried to find out how the Bereavement Service was functioning. As a new structure it would take time to operate fully.

Councillor J Ward (Chairman of Cemeteries Working Group) thanked the Officers for the good work that had been carried out on the Cemeteries to date. He explained that some Councillors had also received training on how the Bereavement Service work and how it had helped their understanding of the function.

Councillor D Attfield wished to thank Mr Taitt and his team for the standard of grass cutting and good appearance of Badshot Lea Cemetery.

Members discussed the Town Clerks request to delegate power and agreed that it should automatically be delegated to Mr Taitt and Miss Coulter.

RESOLVED:

- a. **To note the changes to the Councils Cemeteries Service as outlined above.**
- b. **To approve the delegation of the powers of the Town Clerk to the Cemeteries Management Team when the Town Clerk is not available.**

CEMETERIES HEALTH AND SAFETY UPDATE

Members received an update report on the current progress of the Health and Safety (of Memorials) Project and to seek approval to continue with the next phase of the Project to make the un-repaired memorials safe.

Members noted that under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977, the Town Council as the Burial Authority for the Cemeteries of West Street, Green Lane, Badshot Lea and Hale has a duty and responsibility to carry out Health and Safety Inspections in its Cemeteries including inspections of Memorials.

It was reiterated that Farnham Town Council will carry out its duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and will ensure that those who have a legal duty to maintain their memorial do so at no further cost to the Farnham Tax Payer. Members also received a copy of a Press Release issued by the nationally recognised Institute of Cemeteries and Crematorium Management (ICCM) on inspections of Memorials for Health and Safety. It demonstrated why the inspections needed to be carried out and the intention behind the exercise.

Memorial Testing had been carried out, following ICCM guidelines in Badshot Lea Cemetery and Green Lane Cemetery. Notices had been placed on insecure memorials requesting those responsible to contact the Council. Where the Council had a record of the purchaser of the Exclusive Rights of Burial they were written to (twice if necessary) requesting them to contact the Council.

Members were informed that the Council had advertised contact information in the local press for owners or interested parties of untraceable memorials. A notice was placed in the Farnham Herald requesting anyone with information regarding the memorials to make contact with the Council. Complete lists of untraceable memorials were displayed in the notice board at Badshot Lea and on the Town Council's website and are available from the Town Council offices.

There were 136 memorials in Badshot Lea that were unsafe with untraceable contacts. Numbers could not be confirmed for Green Lane Cemetery as the administration process had not been completed but to date 171 memorials in Green Lane had untraceable contacts.

For memorials that had been placed on un-purchased grave plots, the maintenance of the memorial is the Council's responsibility. It was suggested to Members that any unsafe memorial, where the responsibility of the memorial lies with the Council, should be laid down.

For memorials where the owners of the Exclusive Rights of Burial could not be traced it was suggested to members that the unsafe memorials be laid down.

Members noted that officers were concerned that memorials should not be laid down if they were of local, architectural or historical value. Any memorials that were considered to fall in this category following assessment by officers and consultation with local groups such as the Buildings Preservation Trust, local historians and genealogy groups would be referred to the Cemeteries Working and Appeals Group for their inspection and recommendation. Officers suggested that these memorials should be repaired in order to preserve their local, architectural or historical value and merit within the cemeteries.

Article 3 of the Local Authorities Cemeteries Order 1977 expressly empowers burial authorities to do “all such things as they consider necessary or desirable for the proper management, regulation and control of a cemetery”, save that they are not thereby authorised to take any action in relation to:

(b) any vault, or any tombstone or other memorial, ***other than action which is necessary to remove a danger which arises by reason of the condition of the vault, or the tombstone or other memorial, itself***”.

Members noted that Farnham Town Council, as the burial authority, has the power to take action necessary to remove or make safe dangerous memorials.

It was agreed that there may be additional costs in the laying down of memorials which would be taken from reserves and with reference to memorials of historical, architectural or local value, it may be necessary to employ the services of a stonemason at a cost to the Town Council.

Members considered a series of proposals to assist with the management of public relations during the period of laying down of memorials:

1. Place ‘laying down’ notices on all memorials to be laid down
2. Place a general ‘laying down’ notice in the cemetery notice board
3. Place a general ‘laying down’ notice on the Town Council website
4. Consider a press release or article based around memorials where permission has been given to lay down from owners of the Exclusive Rights of Burial. A photo would be taken of work done and incorporated into an article.

RESOLVED:

- a. **That a prioritised programme of laying down of memorials in Farnham Town Council’s Cemeteries which have been found to be unsafe and no owners can be traced be approved.**
- b. **That the public relations strategy to inform the public be approved.**

C 063/08 COMMUNITY AND REVENUE GRANTS – THE WAY FORWARD

Members were asked to consider the level of Councillor involvement in the initial review of Grant applications.

It was agreed that a working group of members would be appointed to consider Community and Revenue Grants and make recommendations to Full Council.

RESOLVED: That a Working Group comprising of the following Members be appointed to consider Community and Revenue Grants and to make recommendations to Full Council, Councillors G Hargreaves, S Hill, S O’Grady and C Storey.

C 064/08 BUDGET PLANNING PROCESS

The Town Clerk explained to Members how the Budget Process would commence for 2009/2010.

Officers would produce an analysis book on budget including projections for necessary revenue costs for the following year, what are known project expenditures and capital expenditures.

There would then be a meeting of the Corporate Development and Audit Task Group which would recommend a financial strategy.

There would be at least one Members Workshop on the budget where issues would be discussed, this would be held on 30 October 2008 with an opportunity for a further meeting on 6 November if further issues needed to be discussed or the budget would be passed to the CDATG before recommendations to Full council on 13 November. The meeting to set the Precept would be held on 8 January 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Budget Planning Process be noted.

C 065/08 ANNUAL TOWN ELECTORS MEETING

Members discussed the date of the next Annual Town Electors Meeting.

Resolved: that the next Town Electors Meeting would take place on 5 March 2009.

Part 2 – ITEMS NOTED

C 066/08 PROJECT UPDATES

Members received a report on the current status of the Council Projects and actions taken under Delegated Authority to the Town Clerk.

C 067/08 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members received the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Consultative Group held on:

12 June 2008
26 June 2008
10 July 2008
24 July 2008
7 August 2008
21 August 2008

RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on 12 June, 26 June, 10 July, 24 July, 7 August and 21 August 2008 and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.

C 068/08 REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

Members received a report of the Farnham in Bloom Working Group – **attached to record minutes.**

Members received a tabled report of the Corporate Development and Audit Task Group – **attached to record minutes** – and presented by Councillor Steel.

Members noted that the report of the Cemeteries Working and Appeals Group had been included in the Agenda.

C 069/08 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received reports from Councillor Storey and Councillor Maines on the Towns and Parishes Meeting – **reports attached to record minutes.**

C 070/08 STAFF RECRUITMENT

Members noted that the recruitment of a Rural Development Co-ordinator (full time) and an Accounts and Asset Co-ordinator (part time) would commence in September/October 2008.

C 071/08 ITEMS TABLED

None.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.55pm. .

Date

Chairman