

FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 7 FEBRUARY 2008 AT
7.00PM AT WRECCLESHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE, GREENFIELD ROAD, FARNHAM

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

Officers Present:

Roland Potter (Town Clerk)
Kevin Taitt (Grounds and Service Manager)
Wendy Coulter (Member and Committee Services Co-ordinator)

C 151/07 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

No members of the public wished to ask a question.

C 152/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors V Duckett, J Maines, S O'Grady and A Thorp.

C 153/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 January, 2008, were signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

C 154/07 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

No members, in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting, disclosed any personal or prejudicial interests in line with the Parish Council's Code of Conduct, or gifts and hospitality in line with Government Legislation.

C 155/07 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

No members of the public wished to make a statement.

Part 1 – ITEMS FOR DECISION

C156/07 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor congratulated the Farnham Team who took part in the Intertown Sports Competition. The Farnham Team won the competition however; the Mayor was disappointed with that the event had not been given more coverage in the local press.

C157/07 CEMETERIES GROUP REPORT

Members received a report on the work undertaken under delegated authority by the Cemeteries Group.

Members noted the Terms of Reference of the Cemeteries Working Group – **attached to record minutes.**

It was reported that following the Council meeting held in December 2007 the Cemeteries Group was asked to consider Health and Safety Issues including whether or not the Council should charge a one off nominal fee. Members noted that the Cemeteries Group had agreed that a one off nominal fee of £50 should be charged and this would include a transfer of memorial, a memorial permit, transfer of ownership and general administration.

Members were asked to consider the delegation of authority to lay down memorials to the Cemeteries Group. Members discussed this issue and agreed that the Cemeteries Working Group should be granted delegated authority to agree to lay down memorials.

RESOLVED: That delegated authority be given to the Cemeteries Working Group to make decisions to lay down memorials.

C158/07 REVIEW OF FEES

Cemeteries

Members received a report on the review of Cemetery Charges for 2008/2009.

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

As part of the Council's budget planning for 2008/2009 it was agreed that income received for the use of cemeteries should be reviewed.

Members were asked to consider the adoption of a financial strategy to ensure that the cemeteries service was not subsidised by residents who chose not to use that service and the fees should also be comparable with neighbouring burial authorities.

The Annual Operating Cost of the Cemeteries for 2008/09 is anticipated to be £103,125 of which income is received from fees of £40,300. This leaves an operating deficit of £62,825 which is currently funded by local residents through the Parish Precept.

The Cemeteries Working Group considered a financial strategy which would address the financial weaknesses in the cemeteries service. This strategy would establish a sound foundation for the Council's Cemeteries to be operated in a professional business environment and be competitive with neighbouring burial authorities.

Members noted that there was also a need to improve and extend the staffing to provide the cemeteries service but that this development would be considered at a later meeting.

Members were asked to consider the following options in order to establish a more robust financial strategy to reduce the financial burden on the Farnham residents as tax payers.

1. Reduce the period of exclusive rights of burial from 100 years to 30 years.
2. Adopt a combined single pricing structure.
3. Adopt cemetery fees to address the deficit in the operational cost of delivering the service.

The Town Clerk explained that currently the purchase of the Right of Burial entitles a family to use a grave for 100 years. The contribution for the maintenance of the cemeteries is allocated over 100 years and the funding is based on the price paid at the time of the purchase. It does not take into account the rising cost of maintenance of the cemeteries and the implications of new legislation e.g. Health and Safety.

The Town Clerk further explained that it is a condition of the purchase that any memorial is maintained by the purchaser or their succeeding family. However due to the Right of Burial for 100 years graves are often not maintained and it is almost impossible to trace families to take responsibility for the graves.

Other factors that the Members considered were that guarantees for memorials are time restricted to thirty years and it is becoming national practice to grant exclusive rights of burial for a period of 30 years with the option to purchase additional 5 year extensions to the time period.

The Town Clerk explained that if the period of Exclusive Right of Burial is reduced it would allow the Council to be proactive in contacting grave owners to extend the exclusive right thereby keeping the Council's records up to date.

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

Members considered the adoption of a consolidated pricing structure. Under the current pricing structure the Town Council charges for individual areas of service which may be charged at different times e.g.:

- ◆ Purchase of Exclusive Rights of Burial
- ◆ Interment fees
- ◆ Memorial fees

Members considered adopting a consolidated pricing scheme where the initial fee includes all elements of the service.

Members considered a review of cemetery fee charges. It was explained that the growing deficit of operating the Council's cemeteries is as a result of the following:

- ◆ The extensive period of exclusive Right of Burial (100 years)
- ◆ Cemetery fees which do not reflect the true cost of operating the cemeteries
- ◆ The rising cost of maintenance of the cemeteries
- ◆ The requirement to provide additional training for staff to comply with new legislation
- ◆ Impact of changes in weather patterns which require grass to be cut more often
- ◆ The requirement to comply with new legislation e.g. Health and Safety

The fees which were recommended were formulated on the basis of being comparable with the fees of neighbouring local burial authorities.

Schedule of Agreed Cemetery Charges 2008/2009	
Service	Fees at 1 March 2008 (£)
Double Depth Grave: First interment, Exclusive Rights of Burial and right to erect a memorial	1,925
Single Depth Grave: First interment, Exclusive Rights of Burial and right to erect a memorial	1,870
Re-opening of grave	670
Purchase of grave	1,050
Ashes: First interment, Exclusive Rights of Burial and right to erect a memorial	800
Children under 12 years	340
Purchase of additional 5 years of Exclusive Rights of Burial	200
Additional inscription for graves purchased prior to 01/03/08	100
Memorial permit for graves purchased prior to 01/03/08	150
Transfer of ownership	65
Administration Charges	50
The Council does not recharge the interment fees for children under 12 years.	

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

RESOLVED:

1. That the Town Council will only grant Exclusive Rights of Burial for a period of 30 years and that there will be an opportunity to purchase an additional 5 years on the anniversary of the completion of each original 5 year period.
2. The Exclusive Rights of Burial for a period of 30 years will be implemented from 1 March 2008.
3. That a consolidated pricing scheme is adopted for the cemeteries service for all new burials or interments.
4. That the new pricing scheme will be implemented from 1 March 2008.
5. That the following consolidated charges are adopted for the cemeteries service.
6. The consolidated charges will be implemented from 1 March 2008.

Allotments

Members considered a review of Allotment Charges for 2008/2009.

Members were reminded that as part of the Council's budget planning for 2008/2009 it was agreed that fees from the rental of allotments would be reviewed.

Members considered three options for a financial strategy to ensure that over an approved period of time the allotment service should not be subsidised from the Parish Precept.

The Annual Operating Cost of the Allotments for 2008/09 is anticipated to be £7,475 of which income is received from fees of £3,470. This leaves an operating deficit of £4,005 which is currently funded by local residents through the Parish Precept.

Members noted that the Council's allotment service also includes additional benefits which are not included in the operational cost of the service and include:

- ◆ Allotment newsletter (4 times per year)
- ◆ Allotment show
- ◆ Annual Allotment Competition
- ◆ Scarecrow Competition
- ◆ Winter allotment lecture

Farnham Town Council's allotment charges were compared to allotment charges at neighbouring local authorities and Farnham Town Council's charges were found to be the lowest in the area.

When the Town Council last reviewed its cemetery charges in 2007/2008 the charges were increased for a 5 rod allotment from £11.50 to £14.00 with a recommendation that the allotment fees should be reviewed to reduce the cost to the residents who pay the parish precept.

Members considered adopting a financial strategy over 3, 4 or 5 years to reduce the cost of allotments. Members debated in detail the issues regarding different lengths of time for a financial strategy and agreed that if the strategy was agreed for five years, the costing would not cover the real cost of the allotments. It was therefore agreed that a three year strategy would be more suitable.

RESOLVED: That the following 3 year financial strategy be adopted for allotment charges:

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

Year	Cost of 5 rod allotment (£)
2007/2008	14.00 (0.27p per wk)
2008/2009	18.90 (0.36p per wk)
2009/2010	23.80 (0.46p per wk)
2010/2011	28.75 (0.55p per wk)

C 159/07 CEMETERY REGULATIONS/CEMETERIES CHARTER

Members were requested to consider delegating to the Town Clerk the authority to amend the Cemetery Regulations and Charter to allow for changes to the Exclusive Rights of Burial/Cemetery Fees and variations to the design and shape of memorials.

RESOLVED: That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to amend the Cemetery Regulations and Charter to change the Exclusive Rights of Burial to 30 Years, to change the Cemetery Fees and to approve variations to the design and shape of memorials.

C 160/07 FARNHAM IN BLOOM GROUP REPORT

Members received a report on the work undertaken under delegated authority by the Farnham in Bloom Group on the Britain in Bloom Project.

Members noted that the Farnham in Bloom Group had agreed its Terms of Reference – **attached to record minutes**.

The Farnham in Bloom group had progressed the Farnham entry for South East in Bloom 2008. This would be based on a contiguous mile around the Town Centre.

All businesses and residents in the Town would be contacted in writing and asked to help with the competition.

A flyer had been produced promoting Farnham in Bloom and asking businesses in Farnham to sponsor hanging baskets. The leaflets will be distributed with promotional packs sent out to all the businesses.

It was noted that partnership working between Farnham Town Council, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council would be encouraged and promoted and officers were liaising with both Councils.

Members noted that the Secret Garden Competition would take place again in 2008 and the open day would be on Sunday 13 July 2008. A leaflet to advertise the competition would be produced and included in the Farnham in Bloom Information Pack.

RESOLVED: That the Farnham in Bloom Working Group progress report be noted.

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

C 161/07 DELIVERY OF AGENDAS

Members received a short report on the delivery of agendas and how possible cost savings for the budget 2008/2009.

Farnham Town Council has a legal duty to summon Members to attend meetings with a signed agenda which must be delivered by post or hand to the address of the Councillor.

The Town Council has no legal duty to provide supporting papers or reports prior to a meeting.

It was noted that currently the cost of posting a Full Agenda is approximately £60 per Full Council meeting and approximately £10 - £15 for a working group agenda.

Members considered the following three options:

- a) to receive by email the supporting papers and reports
- b) to receive by email a notification that the Full Agenda and supporting papers are on the website for inspection and/or downloading
- c) to continue to receive supporting papers and reports by post prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Full Agenda including the supporting papers and reports would continue to be sent by post prior to the meeting.**
- 2. Other general communications would be made available for collection by members at the Council offices or at Council Meetings.**
- 3. All Working Group Agendas and Papers would continue to be sent via email to Members.**

C 162/07 PROJECT UPDATES

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

RESOLVED: That the progress report on the current status of Council Projects and actions taken under Delegated Authority to the Town Clerk be noted.

C 163/07 PRIMARY CARE TRUST GUILDFORD AND WAVERLEY CO-DESIGN GROUP

Members were asked to nominate an additional Farnham Town Council representative for the Guildford and Waverley Primary Care Trust Co-Design Group.

RESOLVED: That Councillor D Le Gal be nominated as Farnham Town Council's additional representative on the Guildford and Waverley Primary Care Trust Co-Design Group.

ITEM 2 APPENDIX A

Part 2 – ITEMS TO NOTE

C 164/07 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members received the list of observations of the Planning Consultative Group meetings held on 3 January and 17 January 2008.

RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on 3 January and 17 January 2008 and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.

C 165/07 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership AGM held on 9 November 2007.

Councillor Cockburn reported that the Voluntary Service Council was now operating across Surrey. The new organisation of the Voluntary Service Council would allow for greater access to funding and training.

C 166/07 UPDATE ON COFFEE MORNINGS

Members received an update on the work carried out as a consequence of the Mayor's Coffee mornings - **attached to record minutes.**

C 167/07 WORKING GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Members noted the current Working Group Membership for 2008 – **attached to record minutes.**

C 168/07 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members received a copy of the Farnham Town Council Budget as submitted to Waverley Borough Council for the request for the parish precept for 2008/2009 – copy attached to record minutes.

C 169/08 ITEMS TABLED

None.

C 170/07 PUBLICITY

Council agreed that a Press Release would be issued regarding the following items:

Farnham Town Council's successful Mayors' coffee mornings
The formal release of the Council's Budget for 2008/2009
The appointment of an official Town Council piper.

**ITEM 2
APPENDIX A**

C 171/07 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of business to be transacted at Agenda Item 21, Farnham Transportation Task Group, Agenda Item 22, Wrecclesham Community Centre, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw at Item 20.

Part 3 – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

C 172/07 FARNHAM TRANSPORTATION TASK GROUP

Members received the confidential minutes of the Farnham Transportation Task Group meeting held on 9 January 2008.

C 173/07 WRECCLESHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE (SUB LEASE)

Members received an update on the current position with Wrecclesham Community Centre.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Date

Chairman