

## FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 10 JANUARY 2008 AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SOUTH STREET, FARNHAM

- \* Cllr C Cockburn (Town Mayor)
  - \* Cllr G Beel (Deputy Town Mayor)
  - \* Cllr D J Attfield
  - \* Cllr V Duckett
  - \* Cllr L Fleming
  - o Cllr (Mrs) P Frost
  - \* Cllr R Frost
  - o Cllr C Genziani
  - \* Cllr G Hargreaves
  - \* Cllr S Hill
  - \* Cllr D Le Gal
  - \* Cllr A Lovell
  - \* 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)  
Nick Goddard (Rural Development Co-ordinator)(Assistant Town Clerk)  
Wendy Coulter (Member & Committee Services Co-ordinator)

#### C 138/07 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

No members of the public wished to ask a question.

#### C 139/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors (Mrs) P Frost and C Genziani.

#### C 140/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2007 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

C 141/07 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 142/07 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr N Moss – Farnham Riverwatch Management Committee (Chairman)

Mr Moss made the following statement:

In Spring 2007 Farnham River Watch became aware of the use in some places of volunteer Flood Wardens and obtained the Environment Agency's folder on the subject. Since these wardens are appointed by parish and town councils Riverwatch brought the document to Farnham Town Councils attention and that has led to it being an item on the Agenda tonight.

In the last 6 or 7 months a great deal has happened:

- Devastating floods occurred. Farnham largely escaped but there were certainly many incidents here especially in July.
- Waverley has been updating its Emergency Plan
- Ideas on climate change are gradually crystallising.
- You have reorganised and set up the Pride in Farnham scheme part of which I believe will cover aspects of the river Wey corridor
- Most recently we have the Pitt Report "Learning the Lessons from the 2007 Floods" – with 72 interim conclusions plus 15 urgent recommendations. Waverley has already been through this to identify which points are at some time likely to affect their responsibilities.

So, although Farnham River Watch still believes that there may be a useful role for Flood Wardens in the town, we have come round to thinking that they should not be considered in isolation. Rather they should be seen as part of a more comprehensive Flood Plan. In turn you may consider this could fit into a wider look at emergency planning at the local level.

The overarching document must be the Waverley Emergency Plan, so is there a need for something at the town level? I understand that other towns and parishes have come to that conclusion including Bramley, Cranleigh and Churt. Clearly that does not necessarily make it right for Farnham but perhaps it does indicate that it is worth considering and perhaps lessons could be learned from their experience.

I emphasise, we are not scare-mongering. Farnham has a good flood defence scheme providing much better protection than some other places on the river Wey. However, it was surface flooding that was a large part of the problem last June and July and that can occur anywhere.

So arguably there is a role for a plan that builds upon:

- Detailed local knowledge e.g., where the surface water hot spots are, vulnerable people, nearby refuges, vulnerable facilities and
- The ability to react quickly in that interval between the start of an emergency when no one quite knows what to expect and when the full control and relief resources have deployed, which takes a little time.

The Mayor thanked Mr Moss for his statement and explained that the Council was investigating the issue of flooding in Farnham in partnership with the responsible local authorities, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

### **Part 1 – ITEMS FOR DECISION**

#### **C143/07     TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Town Mayor informed members that she had attended a number of Battle of the Bands concerts at Christmas Eve she visited Farnham Hospital and was very impressed with the care that the patients received. The Mayor also attended a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party at Riverside Court and was again very impressed with the level of care the residents received.

The Mayor also reminded Councillor and members of the public about why the Council had changed from the committee system to having single Council meetings. She reminded members that debate now took place in the Council meetings and that the new system freed up the officers time.

The Mayor reminded Members that the Visioning Workshop would be held on Thursday 17 January 2008 at 7pm.

#### **C144/07     BUDGET (PRECEPT)**

Members received a report on the Council's Precept for 2008/2009. The report reminded members that the Net Operational Budget of £865,286 was approved at the Council meeting held on 13 December 2007.

The Net Operating Cost would be as follows:  
Less payments from Reserves previously identified as a Revenue Cost to be funded from Reserves: (market Stalls £2,000 and Visitor Information Points £10,000).

Funding to be identified from other sources would be £853,286.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the Council receives no funding from businesses or central government. All services provided by Farnham Town Council are funded only by the residents of Farnham through the Parish Precept and from income derived from the Town Council's services.

Members were reminded that the Precept for 2007/2008 was £821,195, based on the Average Band D Household Tax Base of 16,821.1, the average Annual Parish Precept for this class of property was £48.82.

Member considered a table of figures which identified the implications of increasing the Precept in 2008/2009.

Members agreed to increase the Precept for 2008/2009 by an inflationary rate of 2.5% which would give Precept of £841,725 and funding to be identified from other sources of £11,561.

Members debated the issue of increasing the Precept to fund the full cost of the Council's operation and considered alternative options to fund the shortfall.

Members considered funding the shortfall from Council Reserves which were anticipated to be approximately £300,000 at 31 March 2008. Members agreed that it would be sensible to retain the reserves at the current level to ensure there would be sufficient funds in case of an emergency.

Members further considered the option of reviewing the Council's income from Allotment and Cemetery charges and agreed that any increase would contribute to making up the shortfall of funding.

The final option that Members considered was requesting the Town Clerk to identify operational savings throughout the year which would not be detrimental to the Council's delivery of services. Members asked the Town Clerk whether it would be possible to identify savings and were assured that it would be possible.

It was proposed by Cllr A Thorp and seconded by Cllr J Maines to increase the Precept by 2.5% and to review the Council's income from Allotments and Cemeteries and to find operational savings throughout the year to fund the Budget shortfall.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the funding shortfall of the Town Council's Budget for 2008/2009 be recovered from a review of service charges and operational savings throughout 2008/2009. The Town Council's Net Operational Budget for 2008/2009 would be £865,286.**
- 2. The Precept for 2008/2009 be agreed at £841,725.**

**Part 2 – ITEMS TO NOTE**

C145/07 **PROJECT UPDATES**

Members noted that there were no significant changes to the Council Projects and Updates since being reported to Council on 13 December 2007, other than the following two items.

### Flooding

Members noted that Officers had identified the need to consider the Town Council's priorities within its emergency planning responsibilities and although this would include the role of Farnham Town Council in promoting the Flood Warden Scheme, the Council's urgent priorities were Cemeteries and Business Continuity due to any pandemic that may occur. However, it was noted that the River Warden Scheme would be investigated in partnership with the Emergency Planning Officer at Waverley Borough Council and the Environment Agency.

### Toilets in Gostrey Meadow

Members noted that Farnham Town Council will not take over the Gostrey Meadow toilets until all works have been completed. Minor problems had been identified which were being resolved and it was hoped that Farnham Town Council would take ownership in the very near future.

### C146/07 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

**RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on 18 December 2007, and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.**

### C147/07 ITEMS TABLED

None

### C148/07 PUBLICITY

Members agreed that a Press Release should be issued on the Council's Precept and Budget 2008/2009.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.00pm.

Date

Chairman