

FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 14th SEPTEMBER, 2006, AT 7.00PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, SOUTH STREET, FARNHAM

- * Cllr (Mrs) A E Mansell MBE (Chairman)
- Cllr M A Clark (Vice Chairman)
- * Cllr D J Attfield (Town Mayor)
- * Cllr C A Cockburn
- * Cllr S Farrow (Chairman, Environmental Services Committee, *ex officio*)
- * Cllr (Mrs) P M Frost (left the meeting at 7.50pm)
- * Cllr R D Frost
- * Cllr C G Genziani (Deputy Town Mayor)
- * Cllr J M Harris
- o Cllr S A G Lang
- * Cllr J E Maines
- * Cllr (Mrs) P M Marriott
- * Cllr M W Norris
- o Cllr (Mrs) S Scrivens

- * Present
- o Apologies for Absence

PS APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

111/06

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor (Mrs) S Scrivens.

PS MINUTES

112/06

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th May and 25th May, 2006, were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PS DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

113/06

<u>Name of Councillor</u>	<u>Agenda No</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Type of Interest</u>	<u>Reason</u>
Cllr (Mrs) P Frost	11	Library Gardens	Personal	Surrey County Councillor
Cllr (Mrs) P Frost	13	Public Conveniences	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor

PS STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

114/06

There were no members of the public present to make a statement.

Part 1 – ITEMS FOR DECISION

PS
115/06

CEMETERY PROCEDURES AND STRATEGIES

Members considered a report on cemetery procedures and strategies. The purpose of the report was:

- to consider and clarify policy, legal and financial implications with regard to burials administration, memorials and cemeteries management.
- outline the advantages of implementing a Cemeteries Charter to improve service delivery and customer care.
- review current Farnham Town Council cemetery administration and management procedures
- identify recommendations for consideration and referral to Full Council

The report identified that the Town Council has no formal and written policies or guidelines for the administration and management of the cemeteries service.

Cemeteries Charter

Members considered the adoption of a cemeteries charter which would:

- Demonstrate the commitment of the Town Council to improve its cemetery services.
- Define the rights of individuals who experience bereavement
- Establish standards of service for the burial administration service, funerals, memorials and cemetery management and thereby provide a clear framework to develop a working relationship with all those partners and clients who provide services within the councils cemeteries.
- That bereavement services are essential to the well being of society.
- Offer the bereaved a greater influence over the arrangement of funerals with the opportunity of controlling costs and offering more satisfaction.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the benefits of adopting and implementing a Farnham Town Council Cemeteries Charter in terms of Service delivery and customer care be noted and agreed in principle.

That the Cemeteries Charter be recommended to Full Council for approval and adoption.

Burial Function

The report identified the legislative framework and recommended good practice from the Department of Constitutional Affairs.

Members considered the following issues:

The need to allow adequate time for the Councils administrative procedure to be completed efficiently and professionally and that this would be accomplished by including in the Councils cemetery regulations that the procedure must allow three clear working days between the receipt of all documentation and the interment.

That the condition of "excepted category" should be reviewed and would apply only to the spouse of a current resident or a person who is already interred in a Farnham cemetery and this would not include father, mother, son, daughter as is presently the case.

In addition the excepted category should apply to residents who die whilst in a residential home outside the town, however there should be a time limit placed on the exception.

That there should be a procedure for funerals directors report to the responsible officer at the cemetery prior to access to the grave side.

That the council would reserve the right for health and safety reasons to temporarily remove memorials to allow safe access for grave digging. Members requested that where ever possible the families that contact should be made with the families effected.

That with regard to sinkage the Town Council would be responsible for the level of graves for the first 12 months but would reserve the right to charge for any levelling after this period.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

That the regulations and specifications be included in the Councils Cemetery Regulations.

Maintenance of Cemeteries

Members considered the health and safety implications of graves which were not maintained and the efficiencies which could be achieved by defining all remaining grave spaces as lawned cemeteries. With the adoption of the principle of a lawned cemetery Members considered the issue of restricting of the specifications of memorials to allow only a headstone with a plinth on which flowers could be placed. Members requested that the specification for the size of memorials and the use words should be included in the regulations.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

That the remaining spaces and areas where there is no internment, be designated a lawn cemetery

That a lawn style memorial layout, that is one which permits a headstone and adjoining plinth (for the placing of floral tributes) only, for future memorials be introduced in Farnham Town Councils Cemeteries as soon as practical.

Memorial Management

Members considered the adoption of a stonemason registration scheme for any memorials work to be carried out in the Councils cemetery including the introduction of method statements to national standards, review of public liability insurance, numbering of grave stones and style and design of memorials.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

That the regulations and specifications be included in the Councils Cemetery Regulations.

Hale Cemetery

Members noted that the report identified that there were no longer any available spaces for new graves and therefore the Council would decline all future requests for new graves.

Members expressed concern at the lack of space and requested that officers be instructed to look at possible opportunities to find new cemetery land within Hale specifically but also around the Town.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Officers look at alternative sites for new cemeteries within the town and that a report should be returned to the committee.

PS
116/06

ALLOTMENTS

Members received a report on the current situation regarding the number of unused allotments and the current waiting list for individuals requiring an allotment. The report identified that:

At the time of the report there were 83 people on the waiting list for allotments within the Councils allotments.

The allotment sites at Farnborough Road and Shepherd and Flock had not been brought in to full operational use and that by opening these allotments may address the issue of the growing waiting list. The cost of bringing the allotments into full use was not available, but both would have to be ploughed and water would have to be made available at Farnborough Road.

The adoption of an allotment strategy which identified 9 aims and objectives including, accessible, secure, well maintained and clean allotments, encouraging sustainable practices, biodiversity and conservation and the management of allotments.

The strategy would be delivered through a 3 year action plan to improve the Councils allotment services.

The adoption of a new tenancy agreement.

Within the strategy members considered the principles of requiring a £25 deposit for new plots, that plots be restricted to a maximum of 5 rods and that all plots be prioritised for Farnham residents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the allotment sites at Farnborough Road and Shepherd and Flock be brought in to full operational Use.

That new tenants be restricted to 5 rod plots and a deposit of £25 be paid on all new plots.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

That the allotment strategy and 3 year action plan be adopted.

That the new tenancy agreement be adopted for all new tenants and renewed for all existing tenants from 1 April 2007 if appropriate.

PS
117/06

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS 2006

Members considered a report on the provision of additional Christmas lights for 2006.

The report identified that there were no suitable trees in Union Road although as an alternative 3 additional trees in South Street could have lights placed in them at an additional cost of £5,220.

Members requested that officers ensured that all the lights were fully working at the time of the switch on.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To agree to illuminate an additional 3 trees in South Street.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO FULL COUNCIL

To release £5,220 from reserves for the purchase and installation of additional Christmas Lights in South Street.

PS
118/06

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006-2007 – INSTALLATION OF PLAY EQUIPMENT

Members considered a report to authorise expenditure from the Committees current capital budget for a new children's roundabout at the Green, Badshot Lea.

Concern was expressed that the expenditure was to replace an item of equipment already the responsibility of Waverley Borough Council. Officers clarified that the proposed expenditure was for an additional item of equipment to enhance the play service. The anticipated cost of the equipment including installation was £7,000. Members requested that there should be signage on the equipment stating that it was supplied by the Town Council.

RESOLVED:

That funding for the new roundabout be released from within the current capital budget.

PS
119/06

DRAFT BUDGET FOR 2007/2008

Members considered a report which identified the Committees draft budget for 2007/08.

The draft budget for 2007/08 was anticipated to be £176,195 (2006/07 £165,090). The increase in budget was attributed to the anticipated Cost of Living increase of 2.75% and the review and salary increments of 5.5%. In addition there had also been a reduction in the subsidised funding available from the District Council on the transfer of ownership of the public conveniences.

Members also noted the proposed capital expenditure budget of £114,500 for 2007/08 which would be prioritised based on funding allocated by Full Council out of the precept calculation.

RESOLVED:

Members noted the report and recommended to Policy and Resources Committee a draft Revenue budget of £176,195.

Part 2 – ITEMS FOR INFORMATION

PS
120/06

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS 9-10 SEPTEMBER 2006

Members noted that the Heritage Open Days had taken place on September 9 – 10 September 2006.

The project had been undertaken in partnership with the Farnham Society and had involved 7 local venues.

PS
121/06

LIBRARY GARDENS, WEST STREET

Members noted that the work had been completed on the surface of the tennis court in the library gardens including the clearing of weeds and the repainting of the lines.

Members also noted that after an arboriculturist assessment on a tree at the entrance to the gardens, various health and safety actions had been undertaken by Surrey County Council.

PS
122/06 FARNHAM IN BLOOM UPDATE

Members noted a letter of thanks received from the Visitors expressing their sincere thanks for the magnificent baskets and boxes around the town.

Members expressed their thanks for the hard work undertaken by Kevin Tait (Outside Workforce Manager) and his team.

PS
123/06 TRANSFER OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCES FROM WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL UPDATE

Members noted that a report on additional enhancements to be funded by the Town Council would be considered at the next meeting of the committee. However it was anticipated that the transfer of ownership would not occur until 1 April 2007.

PS
124/06 ALLOTMENTS SHOW

Member noted that the Town Councils allotment show had once again proved successful with 11 exhibitors providing 69 exhibits. The show included a question and answer session with Mr Ron Watts.

PS
125/06 HIDDEN BRITAIN UPDATE

Members received an update report on the Hidden Britain Project. The First claim for £4,053.22 had been submitted to DEFRA and the work included in the project were:

Three Maps

Publicity including taking part in the Tourism South East Cosmopolitan Campaign.

A branding project in partnership with the University College of Creative Arts

Visitors Survey to be conducted by Tourism South East

PS
126/06 HEALTHCHECK UPDATE

Members received an update report on projects identified under the Farnham Health Check which had been incorporated into the general duties of Council officers

PS
127/06 ITEMS TABLED

None

PS PUBLICITY
128/06

Members decided to issue a press release on the Cemeteries.

Part 3 – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

There were no confidential items.

The Chairman closed the meeting at 8.47pm.

Date

Chairman