



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 5 August 2010

Place

The Council Chamber, South Street, Farnham

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

- * Present
- o Apologies for absence

Officers Present:

Roland Potter (Town Clerk)

Wendy Coulter (Members and Committee Services Co-ordinator) (recorded minutes of meeting).

Ginny Gordon (Town Clerk's Secretary)

The proceedings of the meeting of Farnham Town Council held on Thursday 5th August 2010 were digitally recorded for Council purposes only.

QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Skingle – Farnham Resident

Mr Skingle asked whether the Mayor had considered handing round a bucket for a collection for his charity at the Band Concerts.

The Mayor replied that he had two charity tea tents at the band concerts.

C 042/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors C Cockburn, P Frost, R Frost and D Le Gal.

C 043/10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 24 June 2010 were signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

C 044/10 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Name of Councillor	Agenda/Minute Number	Subject	Type of Interest	Reason
L Fleming	Agenda No 8	Mosaic and Seat – Boots Courtyard	Personal	Farnham Town Council – Farnham Public Arts Trust Observer.
S O'Grady	Agenda No 11	Staffing Review	Personal	Wife is a member of staff.

C 045/10 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Skingle – Farnham Resident

Asked the Council what Project Skywalker was and what refurbishment was referred to in Item 13.

The Mayor replied that it was the 'Project Name' for the transfer of the Council Offices in Farnham to Farnham Town Council. The refurbishment referred to general decorating which would be discussed later in the meeting.

C 046/10 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor explained that as it was the end of the Carnival Season and all the schools were on holiday, it was not a busy time for the Town Mayor.

However the Town Mayor reported back on some of the events that he had attended. 4 July, Independence Day was a very good day, the Mayor waved off the Cycle Ride in the morning and then the Picnic in the Park Event was very successful and the Mayor congratulated all who had been involved.

The Town Mayor attended the University of Creative Arts Graduation ceremony at Guildford Cathedral.

He joined the Farnham Society to welcome the Guildford Society on a visit and was pleased to do so as the Farnham Society then joined Farnham Town Council Councillors in a litter pick for Farnham in Bloom Judging Day. The Mayor commented that he was pleased to see more cooperation with the Farnham Society.

The Town Mayor reported that he and the Deputy Town Mayor went on a tour of the Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice on 7 July which was very informative. On 10 July he opened Bells Piece Fair. On 22 July he and the Town Clerk had a private meeting with the local Inspector of Police.

On 31 July the Town Mayor reported that he had attended the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association UK Annual Convention at East Woldham. He addressed over 30,000 people who attended the event.

The Town Mayor went on to remind Members that nominations for the Farnham Awards closed on 6 August 2010.

The Town Mayor also mentioned that the Mayors Charity Tea Tent would be at the Band Concerts on 8 and 15 August 2010 and all donations of cakes would be gratefully welcomed.

Part I – Items for Decision

C 047/10 FINANCE – OUTLINE 5 YEAR CAPITAL PLAN

Members received a report which outlined a 5 Year Capital Plan and suggested reallocation of Reserves (**report attached to record minutes**).

The Town Clerk explained that the report contained a summary 5 Year Capital Programme with anticipated costs – **attached to record minutes**. He explained that all true expenditure would be subject to quotes and tendering where required, by the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

The original report had been considered by Corporate Development and Audit Working Group however the report submitted to Council had been amended to take into account re-roofing Hale Cemetery Chapels and repairs to footpaths in the Cemeteries.

The report also included the projected Reserves and movements within Reserves for the financial year ended 31 March 2010. The projected Reserves and movements within Reserves are **attached to record minutes**.

Attached to record minutes is a forecast of the impact of movement on the reserves over the following 4 years to 31 March 2015.

Cllr Duckett asked whether the Outside Workforce had been consulted about what type of vehicle they needed to carry out their duties.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Outside Workforce had been consulted on what type of vehicle and the type of mowers that they required. He also confirmed that all the vehicles would be LPG in the most economical ratio.

Cllr Lovell expressed his concern that anything that the Town Council spent would be under closer scrutiny than ever before. He asked whether all the items included in the report were essential or whether they could be deferred.

The Town Clerk explained that the Outside Workforce vehicles are anything between eight and twelve years old. The bills for repairing them were becoming uneconomical. The watering for Farnham in Bloom had increased and the trailers with the water bowsers were too heavy for the vehicles to tow.

The Town Clerk went on to explain that the replacements outlined in the report were suggestions, if the vehicles were not ready to be replaced, they would not be. However, the Ranger Vehicle needed to be replaced with a four wheel drive to enable to Town Council to respond in adverse weather conditions.

Cllr Lovell asked whether the repairs and decoration to the building were necessary and essential.

The Town Mayor explained that all items would come to Council for consideration as and when they were required. He explained that the Town Clerk was trying to give Members an indicative idea of costs for the next five years.

Cllr Steel asked whether contract hire had been considered for the vehicles and mowers.

The Town Clerk replied that contract hire had been considered for the mowing machines but due to the high levels of usage a suitable price could not be sought. Before the vehicles are replaced, all costing options are considered.

Cllr Maines asked if the windows of the building were replaced, whether they would be replaced like for like.

The Town Clerk replied that the building was not a listed building but that in the original investigations into costings for the building the quote obtained was to replace the windows with modern materials, double glazed but that were like for like.

Cllr Fleming, the Lead Member of the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group (CDAWG) assured Members that the CDAWG would scrutinise all suggested spending very carefully.

Cllr Steel asked whether Wrecclesham Community Centre was essential and something that the Town Council should own as it appeared to cost a great deal of money.

The Town Clerk explained that the Wrecclesham Community Centre had been gifted to the Town Council by Sir Ray Tindle.

The Town Clerk brought Members attention to the second part of the report about Reserves. He explained that the Reserves had been brought to Council for consideration of reallocation, as had been requested at the last Council Meeting. Cllr Mrs Frost had suggested that the funding earmarked for Traffic and Highways should be used elsewhere as the Town Council did not have responsibility for that area. Therefore it was suggested that the £50,000 that had been in Earmarked Reserves for Traffic and Highways had been transferred back into the General Reserve.

As part of the Cemetery Enhancement Programme the plan was to sell one of the Cemetery Buildings which would then fund the enhancements to the other buildings. It was suggested that £90,000 be transferred back to General Reserves.

There was excess funding in the Christmas Lights Reserve, therefore it was suggested that £10,000 remain in the Reserve for repairs to the infrastructure and the rest be transferred back to General Reserves.

The Town Clerk explained to Members that based on the project carried out to estimate costings that £98,000 be transferred from General Reserves into a Reserve specifically for the building. He explained that if all the projects, as outlined in the report, were carried out, the impact on the Reserves was illustrated in the report.

At the end of the year the Town Council would have Earmarked Reserves of just under £270,000 and a General Reserve of £467,000. The Capital Plan had also been projected for a potential further four years.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Election fund would be used in 2011 but that each year monies were put aside to build up the Election Reserves again.

The Projection was at the end of 2014 the Reserves would be down to £643,000. The Town Clerk explained that it was good practice, as there was no definitive guidance, that the General Reserve should be half of the Precept.

Cllr Lovell expressed his concern that it appeared to be a substantial drop in Reserves over the next few years. He asked whether it would assist the Town Council with avoiding putting up the Council tax. He went on to say that he understood the reason for not having the Traffic and Highways fund, however the town had a problem in that Surrey County Council did not have any funding either. He explained that sometimes you could guarantee funding from Surrey County Council by putting in money from the Town Council.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the choice of whether the Town Council had a Traffic and Highways Reserve was for Members to decide. He explained that it was an exercise in figures and the monies did not have to be spent in the way suggested.

He explained that for the past four years the Town Council had under precepted for its expenditure and the Town Council was now in the position where it could not raise the precept for this year or the following year because that was what the government wanted.

Cllr Steel said that the projected Reserves for the next five years was very interesting. It was a trend and was not a healthy trend. He explained that it was something that the Town Council had to consider very carefully in the future. The Town Clerk had pointed out the various debates that had taken place about the Precept and Cllr Lovell had mentioned that money should be taken out of Reserves to keep the Council Tax down. He explained that this was a bad policy, to artificially keep the tax low, you would never make it up.

Cllr Steel asked the Town Clerk whether, as a Town Council that was only funded by the residents and did not receive any government grants, whether the Town Council still had the power to decide whether the precept could be raised.

The Town Clerk replied that at the current time there was no capping of the town and parish councils. However the government was trying to bring in a question of referendum.

Cllr Steel replied that the Town Council needed to think very carefully the next time it set the Precept.

Cllr Lovell requested that the Reserves for Traffic and Highways be considered at a later stage.

Cllr Storey asked whether if the monies were left in the Traffic and Highways Reserve they could then be spent elsewhere.

The Town Clerk clarified that the Earmarked Reserves were not capital receipts so they did not have to be spent on capital expenditure. The Reserves could be moved around at the discretion of the Council, as it saw fit.

The Members requested that the reallocation of Reserves be noted.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the adoption of the 5 year plan (attached to record minutes) be noted.**
- 2. That the reallocation of Reserves (attached to record minutes) be noted.**
- 3. That the financial implications be noted.**

C 048/10 TRANSFER OF ASSETS

Members received a report on the Transfer of Assets from Waverley Borough Council to Farnham Town Council.

The Town Clerk explained that a group had been set up to negotiate the Transfer of the South Street Offices from Waverley Borough Council, back to Farnham Town Council. Negotiations had proceeded with help from Waverley Borough Council Members.

The Town Council had been offered the building at nil cost and as part of the deal, the Town Council would provide accommodation in the form of a shared reception with Waverley Borough Council rent free for five years plus the use of an interview room. Waverley Borough Council had requested an Overage Clause for 15 years. The full details were yet to be seen, but the understanding was that it would reduce, on balance, year on year.

Members were asked to approve the transfer of the South Street Offices and enable the Town Clerk and Lead Member of Corporate Development and Audit Working Group to move forward with the legal process.

Cllr O'Grady requested that if there was an Overage Clause it would include something to allow if the Town Council needed to move to another building the Overage is only applied on any excess profit realised, not on the for sale value of the building. If the Town Council had to sell the building and move elsewhere it would have to pay full market value for whatever was bought and nothing should be refunded other than the excess profit.

The Town Clerk explained that the principle was a reducing balance on the valuation cost of £305,000 which would reduce year on year plus a reducing balance on the profit. The profit would be based on anything in excess of £305,000.

Cllr Thorp asked whether the decision would come back for Council.

The Town Clerk explained that he hoped that once the authority had been delegated down, the matter could progress without being brought back to Council to prevent any further delay.

Cllr Steel commented that it had taken a long time to get to this point. He believed that the Council should go ahead with the process and delegate the powers to the Town Clerk and Lead Member of Corporate Development and Audit Working Group. He suggested that only if the Town Clerk and Lead Member reached a situation that they were concerned about, that it should be brought back to Full Council for consideration.

The Town Clerk clarified that the Town Councils solicitors would be working with them to negotiate the Overage Clause.

Cllr O'Grady asked whether there was sufficient funding to allow the Town Clerk and Lead Member of Corporate Development and Audit Working Group to complete the negotiations. He requested that the funding for the Skywalker Project be released in order to facilitate the process.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Transfer of the Councils Offices, South Street, Farnham at nil cost be approved.
2. That negotiation for an Overage Clause for a maximum of 15 Years be agreed.
3. That the Town Clerk and the Lead Member of Corporate Development and Audit Working Group be delegated the responsibility to authorise the Transfer of the Asset and to release to them the Skywalker Budget funds, if required.

C 049/10 MOSAIC AND SEAT – BOOTS COURTYARD

Members considered a report on the possible transfer of a Mosaic and Seat situated in the Boots Pharmacy Courtyard.

Members noted that if the Town Council took on the asset, permission would need to be sought from the land owners of the courtyard in order for maintenance to be carried out. Members also noted that the Mosaic and Seat would need to be insured.

Members were of the view that as the assets were not on common, publicly owned land it would not be appropriate for the Town Council to take on the asset.

Members agreed unanimously that the transfer of Mosaic and Seat, situated in the Boots Pharmacy Courtyard, to Farnham Town Council, be refused.

RESOLVED:

To refuse the transfer of the Mosaic and Wooden Seat in the Boots Courtyard, Farnham.

Part 2 – Items Noted

C 050/10 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members received the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Consultative Group held on 1 June 2010, 8 July and 15 July 2010.

RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on, 1 June 2010, 8 July 2010 and 15 July 2010 and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.

C 051/10 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of business to be transacted at Agenda Item 11, Staffing Review, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw at Item 11.

Part 3 – Confidential Items

C 052/10 STAFFING REVIEW

Members received a report on the implementation of a Staffing Review.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.55pm.

Date

Chairman