



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

A

Minutes Full Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 13 November 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
- o Cllr D Attfield
- o Cllr C Cockburn
- * Cllr V Duckett
- o Cllr (Mrs) P Frost
- * Cllr R Frost
- * Cllr C Genziani
- o Cllr G Hargreaves
- * Cllr S Hill
- o Cllr D Le Gal
- o Cllr A Lovell
- * Cllr J Maines
- * Cllr S O'Grady
- * Cllr R Steel
- * Cllr C Storey (left the meeting @ 9.10pm)
- * 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)
Ginny Gordon (Receptionist/Farmers' Market Co-ordinator)

C 075/08 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

There were no questions by the public.

C 076/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors, D Attfield, C Cockburn, (Mrs) P Frost, A Lovell, G Hargreaves and D LeGal.

C 077/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council meeting held on 18 September 2008 were signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

C 078/08 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Name of Councillor	Agenda/Minute No	Subject	Type of Interest	Reason
J Maines	C 081/08	Grant Application for 40 Degreez	Personal/Prejudicial	Chairman of Trustees
V Duckett	C 081/08	Grant Application for 40 Degreez	Personal	Partner of Chairman of Trustees.
S O'Grady	C 081/08	Grant Application for HOPPA	Personal	Waverley Borough Council representative
R Steel	C 081/08	Grant Application for New Farnham Repertory Actors Company	Personal	Past associations
R Steel	C 081/08	Grant Application for Farnham Maltings	Personal	Waverley Borough Council Representative on Farnham Maltings Management Committee
C Storey	C 081/08	Grant Application for Voluntary Action South West Surrey	Personal/Prejudicial	Personally know the Chairman
J Ward	C 088/08	Tabled Item – Council Offices Accommodation	Personal	Knows builder

C 079/08 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Mr Skingle asked whether there had been any progress on the repairs to Victoria Road. Mr Skingle also asked why the Bandstand required piling.

The Town Clerk responded that the Repairs to Victoria Road were the responsibility of Surrey County Council, but that the Council would investigate.

The Town Clerk explained that the question about the Bandstand would be answered later in the agenda under the Project Updates.

C 080/08 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor thanked everyone for attending the Remembrance Sunday service at St Andrews Church. She was very impressed with Daisy from Heath End School and Libby from Weydon School who read wonderful poems, it was nice to see so many young people involved.

The Mayor reminded members that the Christmas Lights Switch On would take place on Saturday 22 November 2008. The Lights would be switched on by Rachel Norris the Olympic Gold Medal winner.

The Mayor asked Members if they could provide any home made cakes for her charity stall at the Farmers' Market on 14 December 2008.

The Mayor reminded Members that there would be a Staff and Members reception on 18 December 2008 at 3pm.

Part 1 – Items for Decision

C 081/08

GRANTS 2009/2010

Members received a summary report on the Grant Applications received for 2009/2010. Within the report were the recommendations of the Grants Group for the Grants 2009/2010.

The Town Clerk explained that the Grants Group had followed the recommendations of Full Council from November 2007 to reduce the Revenue Grants by 20%. The Grants Group also recommended that this reduction be applied to all grants applications.

The Town Clerk also explained to Members that a late application had been received from HOPPA which would be considered.

Farnham Maltings Association

The Town Clerk explained to Members that the recommendation of the Grants Group was based on the surplus that the Maltings made and the high level of reserves that were indicated on the grant application. The Grants Group recommended that the Maltings be awarded £20,000 up to a maximum of £24,000, which was Full Council's recommendation from November 2007.

The Town Clerk explained that there were two issues to consider; the recommendation of the Grants Group for £20,000 or to consider the policy advice of Council of the previous year of £24,000.

Cllr Frost, the Farnham Town Council representative on the Farnham Maltings Management Committee had recently been to the AGM. Cllr Frost explained that the reason that the Maltings appeared to have substantial reserves was that they had received monies from other organisations and had put them into reserves. Cllr Frost asked the Town Clerk whether there was a Service Level Agreement with the Farnham Maltings.

The Town Clerk replied that there was no formal agreement. However, the Grants Group had recommended that any grant award should be subject to a service Level Agreement with a recommendation that a certain percentage be spent on Live Theatre.

Cllr Frost thanked the Town Clerk for the clarification. He went on to explain that the Maltings had been carrying out a lot of Outreach Work in the community, it was not just a creative centre but also a place for Out Reaching to the community.

Cllr O'Grady agreed that he knew that the Maltings were doing Outreach Work as funding for it had been sought through the South Street Trust. Cllr O'Grady explained that one of the factors that the Grants Group had considered was the funding from other sources.

Cllr Frost confirmed that the Maltings had been doing theatre work in the new Tindle Suite.

Cllr Steel explained that the Outreach Work that the Maltings carried out was all fully funded and funded to cover the whole of the South East but many of their activities benefit Farnham and Waverley. The work carried out in the Tindle Suite was done by the Farnham Repertory Actors Company as a touring theatre company, with a lot of practical help from the Maltings.

The Town Clerk drew Members attention to the application submitted by the Farnham Maltings, in particular the Budget Details, where it was identified that they had made a surplus of £81,682 which was the basis of the Grants Group recommendation.

Cllr J Ward proposed that the Grants Group recommendation of £20,000 be agreed. This was seconded by Cllr L Fleming.

A vote was taken, 9 for, no objections and 3 abstentions.

Resolved: That the Farnham Maltings be awarded £20,000 Revenue Grant for the year 2009/2010.

Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau

The Town Clerk informed Members that the Grants Group had recommended that the Farnham Citizens Advice grant should be reduced by 20% to £24,000.

Cllr Duckett explained to Members that the Citizens Advice Bureau was going from strength to strength, although they had joined together to become a Waverley wide organisation. They were still small local groups, seeing more and more people from Farnham and when the credit crunch took effect, would see a lot more. Cllr Duckett expressed his opinion that he would really like to see the Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau receive the whole of the grant requested.

Cllr Fleming agreed with Cllr Duckett, however she explained that the Grants Group had requested a more detailed breakdown of costs to ensure that the grant awarded was going to benefit Farnham. The Grants Group felt that the application was a bit vague.

Cllr Duckett explained that he would be happy for the Council to award the recommended grant but if he spoke to the Citizens Advice Bureau and asked them to emphasise how the money, received from Farnham Town Council was spent, then would it be acceptable for the Town council to give them the whole grant?

The Town Clerk reminded Members that they could put monies aside for funding the Citizens Advice Bureau. The Town Clerk explained that the Grants Group were concerned that the Town Council may be funding a general pot. If they had received an application that was for specific projects, relevant purely to Farnham then it would have been considered in a wider remit. However the question was, should the Council be funding a general pot of money?

The Town Clerk also reminded Members, at a previous Council discussion, concern had been raised that the Council spent 13.5% of its Precept on Grant Funding.

The Town Clerk suggested that Members could agree the Grants Group recommendation, but if the Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau had a specific project they wished to apply for later, they could make a separate application.

Cllr Steel commented that if the grants had been considered 6 months before, no one would disagree with the recommendation, however these were exceptional times. Cllr Steel was concerned that a number of people in Farnham would be affected by the recession and that in the last 6 weeks the numbers of people visiting the Citizens Advice Bureau had risen.

Cllr Steel wanted to see the Council come up with a solution which would allow the Citizens Advice Bureau to have enough money to finance the amount of extra work.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Town Council had already funded the Citizens Advice Bureau for this financial year 2008/2009 in which the credit crisis had struck and which would take them up to 31 March 2009.

The Town Clerk suggested the Council remain in line with its policy of reducing the grant by 20% to £24,000 as recommended by the grants group and if the Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau could demonstrate hardship throughout the following year and the credit crunch continued to grow then they could come back to the Council with a further application and the Council could consider additional funding.

Cllr Steel proposed that the Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau be awarded £24,000 but that if hardship could be demonstrated throughout the year, the Citizens Advice Bureau could apply for further funding.

This was seconded by Cllr Thorp.

A vote was taken and was carried; however Cllr Maines abstained from voting due the fact that she had an application in from her own organisation, 40 Degreeez.

RESOLVED: That the Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau (FCAB) be awarded £24,000 and that should the FCAB be demonstrating hardship and be prepared to demonstrate proof of hardship, the Council would consider a further grant application.

40 Degreeez

Cllr Maines, as Chairman of the Trustees of 40Degreeez highlighted a few points. Although 40 Degreeez was applying for the same grant as last year, the organisation had upped its services and they needed to apply for funding everywhere they could as they were facing a large deficit. Cllr Maines explained that 40Degreeez would be applying to Surrey County Council for specific parts of the ongoing project. The Youth Worker employed by themselves was still on her induction course and would not start until January.

Cllr Maines left the room having declared a Prejudicial Interest in the 40Degreeez Grant.

Cllr Duckett agreed that Cllr Maines had outlined why 40Degreeez needed the funding, they were a wonderful organisation and would not ask for the money unless it was needed. They were seeing more and more things happen and dealing with more disenfranchised youngsters, including youngsters excluded from school, who had been helped by 40 Degreeez and were now attending college. Cllr Duckett expressed his opinion that 40 Degreeez was a special case and that he would be disappointed if they did not receive the full grant.

Cllr O'Grady explained that the Grants Group considered carefully the 40 Degreeez grant and the subject of the excluded youngsters did come up. Cllr O'Grady pointed out that youngsters who are excluded from school are still legally obliged to be funded by Surrey County Council and the Town Council should not subsidise the County Council in that way. Cllr O'Grady explained the Grants Group were recommending that Council follow its policy, which it agreed in November 2007 to reduce the grants by 20%.

Cllr Steel explained that as an organisation the Town Council gives a huge amount of money away in grants each year and the Council made the decision last year that it would take steps to reduce the amount that it gives away. The Grants Group did an excellent but difficult job in recommending which organisations should be supported and the Grants Group should be supported with their recommendation.

Cllr Duckett proposed an amendment that 40 Degreez be funded the full £6,000 that they requested.

There was no seconder to Cllr Duckett's proposal.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that they should consider the recommendation of the Grants Group for £4,800.

It was proposed by Cllr Fleming that 40 Degreez be awarded £4,800 and was seconded by Cllr Storey.

A vote was taken 10 in favour.

RESOLVED: That 40 Degreez be awarded £4,800 for the financial year 2009/2010.

Cllr Maines returned to the meeting.

HOPPA

The Town Clerk explained to Members that the HOPPA application had only just been received and following the policy recommended by Council in November 2007 that although HOPPA have applied for £20,000 the grant should be reduced by 20%. The Town Clerk reminded Members that, as with the other organisations HOPPA were informed in November 2007 that their grant would be reduced by 20% to £16,000. However it was for Members to consider and debate.

Cllr Fleming recognised HOPPA's application for 2009/2010 however noticed that their financial statement was for the year ended March 2007. It would be better to have the financial statement for the year ended March 2008.

Cllr Thorp agreed with Cllr Fleming and asked if HOPPA could be requested to provide the latest set of accounts.

Cllr O'Grady explained that HOPPA were not actually required to produce their accounts until 10 months after the close of the financial year.

Cllr Fleming pointed out that in the application submitted it said that they had their 2008 accounts, but just not submitted them.

Cllr Thorp agreed with Cllr O'Grady however, he pointed out that all the organisations were aware of the process the Council went through and of the requirement to provide the right kind of information.

The Town Clerk suggested as the Council would be considering its Budget on 11 December there would be no problem with going back to HOPPA and asking them to submit their 2008 accounts for that meeting.

RESOLVED: To defer the decision on the HOPPA grant until the financial statement for year ending 31st March 2008 has been received.

Voluntary Action South West Surrey

Cllr Storey left the room having declared a Prejudicial interest in the Voluntary Action South West Surrey Grant Application.

The Town Clerk explained to Members that the grant applied for was £2,000, the Grants Group had concerns about the funding going into a general fund. The Grants Group agreed to recommend that the Councils Policy of reducing funding by 20% should also be followed for the Community Grants and recommended that the Voluntary Action South West Surrey receive £1,600.

Cllr Frost was surprised to see a grant application from Voluntary Action South West Surrey as they had received a large grant from the Lottery Fund.

Cllr Thorp proposed that Voluntary Action South West Surrey be awarded £1,600 this was seconded by Cllr Fleming.

RESOLVED: That Voluntary Action South West Surrey be awarded £1,600 for the financial year 2009/2010.

New Farnham Repertory Actors Company

The Town Clerk reminded Members that although the New Farnham Repertory Actors Company (NFRAC) had applied for £6,000 the maximum Community Grant awarded was £2,000. The Grants Group had considered what would be appropriate to fund and recommended a contribution of £250 per week for the hire of the marquee for the period of their event, which would total £1,750.

It was proposed by Cllr O'Grady that the New Farnham Repertory Actors Company be awarded £1,750 this was seconded by Cllr Fleming.

Cllr Steel abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED: That the New Farnham Repertory Actors Company be awarded £1,750 for the financial year 2009/2010.

Farnham Festival Management Committee

The Town Clerk explained that the Grants Group were concerned that only two schools from the Farnham area were included in the programme. The Grants Group felt that it was a worthwhile event however and recommended that £650 would be an appropriate amount to award.

It was proposed by Cllr Thorp that the Farnham Festival Management Committee be awarded £650 this was seconded by Cllr Ward.

RESOLVED: That the Farnham Festival Management Committee be awarded £650 for the financial year 2009/2010.

Vivaldi Singers

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Town Council received a number of regular applicants. Vivaldi Singers was a regular applicant and had been funded by the Town Council for 5 consecutive years. It had always been the policy of the Council that wherever possible groups should seek to reduce their dependence on the Council and become more sustainable.

Members had discussed in November 2007 whether Vivaldi Singers should receive a grant and it was recommended by the Grants Group that this time they should not receive a grant.

Cllr Maines remembered the long discussion that had taken place in 2007 regarding the Vivaldi Singers and suggested that this time the Grants Group recommendation of nil, be agreed.

RESOLVED: That the Vivaldi Singers be awarded Nil for the financial year 2009/2010.

Farnham Carnival

The Town Clerk reiterated that the Town Council supported the Farnham Carnival and sees it has an important part to play in the community of Farnham, promoting community spirit. However the Council's funding is not intended for organisations to pass on. Therefore, the Grants Group recommended that the grant be awarded for specific expenses to deliver services and not put into a general fund. On that basis the Grants Group recommended that £1,630 should be awarded towards traffic lights, banners, St Johns Ambulance and P A Equipment and the entertainment funding be reduced to £1,000. The recommendations were for Members to discuss and consider.

Cllr Duckett explained that he was more involved with the Hale Carnival than the Farnham Carnival but assumed they operated in the same way. There would be no guarantee that the Carnival would make a profit, but if they did raise extra money it would be given to charity. Cllr Duckett was pleased that the Council could support the Farnham carnival with money.

Cllr Maines said that the Farnham Carnival was a tremendous event for the town and that if the Council ran it themselves it would cost a lot more money. Cllr Maines supported the grant and suggested they get the full grant requested.

Cllr Frost explained the Hedgehogs and the Lions collected money for charity, not to fund the Farnham Carnival so they did not make a profit. The Farnham Carnival was important to the area and should receive the full amount requested.

The Town Clerk suggested that Members consider agreeing the recommendation of the Grants Group but if the Farnham Carnival had difficulty in covering its costs the Council could consider a further application.

Cllr Ward supported the recommendation of the Grants Group and the Council should allow the Farnham Carnival to come back for further funding if it was needed.

The Town Clerk recommended the Council limit the total amount granted to £4,000, which was originally applied for.

Cllr Ward proposed that the Farnham Carnival be granted a total of £2,630 but that if they demonstrate hardship the Council would consider a further grant up to a total value of £4,000 this was seconded by Cllr Fleming.

A vote was taken 9 for, 1 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED: That the Farnham Carnival be awarded a total of £2,630 for the financial year 2009/2010. However if the Farnham Carnival produced proof of hardship the Council would consider a further grant application up to a total of £4,000 which was originally requested.

Project 2010

The Town Clerk explained that unfortunately the Project 2010 grant application fell outside the Council's remit of grant funding because the request was for a mezzanine floor for a staff room. The Council's grants were more directed towards children and not staff. The Grants Group had recommended that the Council should not fund this project.

It was proposed by Cllr O'Grady that Project 2010 be awarded nil this was seconded by Cllr Fleming.

RESOLVED: That Project 2010 be awarded nil.

Creative Response

The Town Clerk explained that the Grants Group had recommended that this application was more suited to apply for the South Street Trust.

It was proposed by Cllr Fleming that Creative Response be awarded nil and be asked to apply to the South Street Trust this was seconded by Cllr Thorp.

RESOLVED: That Creative Response be awarded nil and be asked to apply to the South Street Trust.

C 082/08

CEMETERIES FOOTPATHS

Members received a report on the condition of the Cemeteries Footpaths and two recommendations for the repair of the footpaths.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Town Council's Health and Safety testing in the Cemeteries covered everything including memorials, trees and footpaths. There were several footpaths that had been identified as needing repair.

The Town Clerk explained that two suppliers were listed, one had quoted for Tarmac and one had quoted for limestone scalpings.

Last year the Council set aside £30,000 for Health and Safety projects in the cemeteries for this type of work.

Members were asked whether they would prefer Tarmac or limestone scalpings and to consider the release of funds from the Health and Safety Budget for the repairs to the footpaths.

Cllr Thorp asked whether there were any technical differences in the finishes and whether the scalpings would mean more maintenance and lead to further costs.

The Town Clerk replied that there was no technical difference but that initially more work would need to be done to tree roots if scalpings were used, to prevent further lifting of the paths.

Cllr Frost wondered whether the limestone scalpings would be as user friendly as Tarmac for people in wheelchairs and with prams etc.

Cllr Ward commented that the costings appeared to be the wrong way round. Scalpings would be easier to lay but are subject to more frequent maintenance and can go soft, so was therefore surprised to see they were more expensive. Cllr Ward asked whether the Outside Services Manager had a recommendation.

The Town Clerk explained that officers had been told tarmacing would be more expensive due to the rising fuel prices. However, when the officers received the quote it was the other way round. The recommendation from Mr Taitt would be Tarmac.

Cllr Genziani commented that his interpretation was that the quote received was for the base tarmac and then another topping would be added so the cost could escalate. Are new paths to be laid or are old paths to be repaired?

The Town Clerk replied that the existing paths would be repaired. As further clarification was required he suggested the matter be brought to the next Council meeting for consideration.

Cllr Maines described a situation where scalpings had been used at Sandy Hill and it was difficult to push wheelchairs over it. More information would be useful.

Cllr Duckett agreed with Cllr Frost that Tarmac would be better and moved that it be discussed at the next meeting of the Council when there was more information.

Cllr O'Grady asked for a complete cost from Supplier A and a second quote for a similar material.

Cllr Steel agreed and asked for more quotes for similar materials.

Cllr Genziani pointed out that if Tarmac is used there are other toppings that can be used to soften the impact.

Cllr Maines asked if, when obtaining the quotes different quotes could be obtained for different toppings.

RESOLVED: To defer the decision on Cemetery Footpaths until further quotes are obtained for Tarmac.

C 083/08

CODE OF CONDUCT

Members received a report on a revised Code of Conduct for Members and a new Code of Conduct for Employees.

Cllr Maines explained the Standards Board Committee at Waverley had discussed the Code of Conduct and had been concerned with the definition of Criminal Offence, when is a Councillor not a Councillor and whether the Code of Conduct should apply to offences committed abroad.

Cllr Ward agreed the definition of criminal offence was the most difficult and needed more definition. With regard to criminal offence abroad, to make it only if it is an offence in the United Kingdom was very sensible. Cllr Ward went on to say he thought the Code of Conduct should apply to everyone; he wished to know the Town Clerk's view whether the Code of Conduct should apply to employees and all Town and Parish Councils.

Cllr Thorp asked whether the Code of Conduct should apply to Parish Council as well. He had no objection with it applying to Farnham Town Council and wished to see it applied to all Town and Parish Councils.

The Town Clerk reminded Members they had been given a list of minor offences and explained the definition of Criminal Offence in the Code of Conduct was perhaps inappropriate and ought to be redefined. The Town Clerk suggested it should be for individual Monitoring Officers to decide whether it was appropriate to suspend a Member while a criminal investigation took place.

The Town Clerk suggested the Code of Conduct should apply to all employees irrespective of rank or for whom they work and it should apply to all Town and Parish Councils.

Cllr Maines suggested that the following wording be used with regard to the fixed penalty notice:

“The nature of the offence should be considered. The Code should contain a similar test as is currently contained in the Code regarding personal or prejudicial interests i.e. whether a member of the public with knowledge of all the relevant facts would reasonably regard the offence to call into question the level of trust, respect and confidence that the public may have should the Member continue to serve as a Member of the authority”.

RESOLVED: That the following wording be agreed in relation to the fixed penalty notice question and that a Code of Conduct should apply to all employees:

“The nature of the offence should be considered. The Code should contain a similar test as is currently contained in the Code regarding personal or prejudicial interests i.e. whether a member of the public with knowledge of all the relevant facts would reasonably regard the offence to call into question the level of trust, respect and confidence that the public may have should the Member continue to serve as a Member of the authority”.

Part 2 – ITEMS NOTED

C 084/08

PROJECT UPDATES

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

The Town Clerk explained the Bandstand was going ahead and to answer Mr Skingle's question regarding the piling, it was a recommendation of the engineers, the bandstand would be placed on seemingly made up soil and the Council had to do it for insurance purposes.

The LDF workshop had been adjourned but would reconvene for Members.

The Town Clerk informed Members an interim pay award had been agreed by the National Employers Organisation of 2.45% however, it was up for arbitration and the arbitration continued.

The Town Clerk explained the Council's photocopier had come to the end of its life and negotiations were in progress through the Office of Government Contracting to lease a new colour photocopier. It would be more efficient and cost an extra £260 per year overall, including printing costs.

Cllr Maines asked whether there would be a Visitor Information Point (VIP) in the Council offices and what was happening downstairs in the offices.

The Town Clerk replied, it was planned to have a VIP in the Council's offices. The officers were in delicate negotiations with other organisations before consideration could be given about where they would be placed.

Cllr Duckett asked whether the Weybourne Allotments were going ahead.

The Town Clerk replied that they were not at the moment but they had not been forgotten.

C 085/08

PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

11 September 2008

2 October 2008

23 October 2008

RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on 11 September, 2 October and 23 October 2008 and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.

C 086/08

REPORTS OF WORKING GROUPS

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

Members received a report of the Cemeteries Working and Appeals Group – **attached to record minutes** – presented by Councillor Ward.

C 087/08

REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received the minutes of the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership Group – **attached to record minutes**.

Cllr Maines asked for clarification on the situation regarding payment to the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership Group (BWVCPG).

The Town Clerk explained payment had been withheld as BWVCPG officers had been requested to confirm value for money for the Council's contribution but had not to date given that information.

C 088/08

ITEMS TABLED

Council Offices – Accommodation

The Town Clerk explained that Waverley Borough Council (WBC) had moved out of the right hand side of the building. They had indicated to Farnham Town Council that the left hand side of the building would be available for the Town Council's use at a peppercorn rent while negotiations were continuing for the rest of the building. However, as Members were aware the Council was desperate for more office accommodation and had been trying to acquire more accommodation for at least 4 years. At the current moment the Council did not have enough office accommodation for its staff. There were 9 officers with an additional officer returning at the end of January 2009.

The Town Clerk reminded Members they had already identified there was insufficient office space and the Clerk had been instructed to negotiate with WBC for more space and an opportunity had arisen.

The Town Clerk explained the problem with the current space downstairs was that it was too open to operate as offices and a reception would need to be included. Officers and Cllr Attfield had a meeting with a builder and had asked him a number of questions:

1. The area needed to be secure, also at night so if the offices were closed and none of the staff were present, no one would have access to the office space.
2. Whatever partition was there needed to afford protection to staff
3. It needed to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act, access for wheelchairs etc.
4. The materials used should be in keeping with the existing building
5. Whatever was constructed needed to give Farnham Town Council a presence in the building that reflected the Council's status and role within the community.

The Town Clerk went on to explain that the timetable for the work would be carried out between the current date and Christmas Eve and office staff would move in over Christmas.

The cost of the building works and preparing the reception area would be £13,782.

The Clerk showed Members a drawing of the proposed screening and reception.

The funding for the project was already in the revenue budget due to the fact that Council had budgeted for higher rents.

The Town Clerk explained that if the Members wished to go ahead and for the project to be completed before the New Year, they would need to consider waiving financial regulations. Members would need to approve the work and Farnham Town Council's transfer of service to another part of the building.

Cllr Maines was concerned about the haste. She could not picture what the reception area would look like or where it would go. Cllr Maines asked if the Listed Buildings officer had been consulted as it was a Listed Building and the Council could not do anything without that permission. She also asked what would happen on a Saturday when the Town Council's staff were not in the building and how much warning the Town Council had received that WBC were moving. She was concerned about trying to move everything before Christmas.

The Town Clerk explained that the Plans had been received the day before the meeting and WBC had given very little notice they were moving. It had been the Council's understanding that it would not happen until April.

The Town Clerk clarified the building was not a listed building and permission would only be required from WBC to carry out the works.

The Town Clerk confirmed the move could wait until the Town Council had secured the transfer of the whole building and it was for Members to decide.

Cllr Maines reiterated she thought it was being carried out too quickly.

Cllr Thorp agreed it was the first opportunity Members had to look at the drawings. He suggested that on the premise that the Town Council might take over the whole building did it want to invest in screening off part of the building. Would it not be better to create an open environment to work in.

The Town Clerk explained that WBC were staying in the left hand side of the building so it was the Town Council's intention to stay on the right hand side of the building. The Town Council did not know what WBC intended to do, whether they would continue to open on a Saturday or not. The original intention was to have a shared reception but WBC had moved away from that idea.

Cllr Steel agreed something should be done, however it had taken Members by surprise because the plans had not been seen before. Cllr Steel suggested that £13,000 just for screens was not an inconsiderable sum. It would not be difficult to get two more alternatives Members could look at and the work could be done speedily. Two or three quotes should be obtained for a job like this.

Cllr Thorp supported Cllr Steels suggestion that it did not need to be done before Christmas.

Cllr Beel asked if the suggestions did not get proposers but further quotes were obtained, how long would that take.

The Town Clerk replied he did not know. Tenders would need to be found as to who could carry out the work to a high quality. The Town Clerk pointed out that a design would also be required and perhaps Members could decide on a design before it went out to tender.

Cllr Beel asked if the proposal went to tender it may come back to the next but one Council meeting, how would Members know what the design looked like to know which one they preferred.

The Town Clerk replied it would be considered again at the March Council meeting.

Cllr Steel asked the Clerk when the builders were first approached as that would give an indication of how long the process would take. It would be hard to make a decision based on one suggestion. If it meant that it would take until March, then that is what should be done.

Cllr Maines suggested the normal process would be to appoint an architect to draw up a design, then that design would be agreed and it would be sent out to tender. The design should not come from the builder or joiner. Someone with sympathy to the building needed to be appointed. The screens would be in place for a minimum of three years, the Council would not want to spend a fortune, but it would still need to be attractive and not just a wooden screen as the drawing indicated.

The Town Clerk asked Members for confirmation they were approving for money to be spent on an architect.

Cllr O'Grady asked what the time imperative was as a move like that would be very disruptive and if it happened at any time other than Christmas it would take out officers time for a number of days, if not a week. Therefore the most appropriate time to do this kind of building work and move would be over Christmas.

Cllr O'Grady did not agree an architect was required for the level of design proposed. The issue was about a building move and the reallocation of space internally. You would rapidly run up high costs by appointing an architect.

Cllr Thorp wished to pick up on the issue of design. The Town Council knew exactly what it needed operationally and an architect was not required. The design proposed could be used and a couple of firms could be approached to come up with quotes to that specification.

On the issue of timing, Cllr Thorp agreed it would be nice if it were completed over Christmas but did not think it was the only opportunity. It could be done over a weekend or the Easter period could be used.

Cllr Maines asked if the Council could make a decision as the paper had not been published. She suggested it might have to be brought back to the next meeting for a decision.

The Town Clerk explained the item could be brought before Council at the meeting for a decision as it is the Town Clerk who determines what goes onto the agenda. He considered it was an urgent issue as it was his understanding of what the Council wanted to achieve and so had placed it on the agenda.

Cllr Fleming recommended the Financial Regulations not be waived and the Town Clerk be asked to obtain three quotes. Cllr Fleming commented she felt it did not require an architect, a good builder would be able to come up with a design and a quote.

Cllr Thorp supported Cllr Fleming's suggestion. The Town Clerk should be given delegated authority to articulate what the design requirement should be and get three quotes.

The Town Clerk reminded Members it would not be appropriate for him to make a decision on the design that it would be for Members to decide.

Cllr Fleming suggested a small working group be set up to work with the Town Clerk and officers to come up with a design, that worked with the building.

Cllr Maines proposed a working group be set up, it might only be a working environment but it would be at the entrance to the building even if it was not there for a long time.

Cllr Duckett proposed the Council instruct the Town Clerk to obtain three proposals for a project to allow the Council to maximise the use of the current available space.

A vote was taken, 9 for and 2 abstentions.

Cllr Ward abstained from voting.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be instructed to obtain three proposals for a project to allow the Council to maximise the use of the current available space.

It was proposed by Cllr Ward that a small working group be set up to assist the Town Clerk and Officers to come up with a suitable design for the new Council reception seconded by Cllr Duckett.

RESOLVED: That a working group comprising of Cllr Attfield, Cllr Genziani and Cllr Fleming assist the Town Clerk and Officers to draw up a suitable design for the new Council reception.

C 089/08

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of business to be transacted at Agenda Item 15, receiving of a confidential report of the Cemeteries Working and Appeals Group, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw at Item 14.

Part 3 – CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

C 090/08 **CEMETERIES APPEALS AND WORKING GROUP**

Members received a confidential report of the Cemeteries Appeals and Working Group.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.50pm. .

Date

Chairman