



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 19 November 2009

Place

The Council Chamber, South Street, Farnham

- * Cllr L Fleming (Town Mayor)
 - * Cllr J Ward (Deputy Town Mayor)
 - * Cllr G Beel
 - * Cllr D Attfield
 - * Cllr C Cockburn
 - * Cllr V Duckett (arrived at 8.35pm)
 - o Cllr (Mrs) P Frost
 - o Cllr R Frost
 - * Cllr C Genziani
 - * Cllr G Hargreaves
 - * Cllr S Hill
 - * Cllr D Le Gal
 - o Cllr A Lovell
 - * Cllr J Maines
 - * Cllr S O'Grady
 - * Cllr R Steel
 - * Cllr C Storey
 - o 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).

QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

Mrs A Cooper a resident of Farnham asked the following question:

“Having heard of the concerns about some of Farnham’s Water Meadows being for sale and how this might lead to much more development than we would like, would the Town Council consider looking into the National Park option as part of the Town Design Statement?”

The Town Mayor replied that Mrs Cooper’s question would be forward to the relevant Working Group for consideration.

C 074/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Frost, (Mrs) P Frost, A Lovell and A Thorp.

C 075/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council Meeting held on 3 September 2009 were signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

C 075/09 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Disclosures of interest were received for the following matters:

Name of Councillor	Agenda Item/Minute Number	Subject	Personal/ Prejudicial Interest	Reason
J Maines	7	Budget 2010/2011	Personal	Chairman of Trustees for 40 Degreez
D Le Gal	7	Budget 2010/2011	Personal	WBC representative on Farnham Maltings Management Committee
S O’Grady	7	Budget 2010/2011	Personal – however Prejudicial if individual staffing issues discussed.	Wife is a member of staff.
R Steel	7	Budget 2010/2011	Personal	WBC representative on Farnham Maltings Management Committee

C 076/09 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

Statements were made by the following Members of the Public:

Mr Skeet - refer to Minute Number 078/09
Mr Wilde – refer to Minute Number 078/09
Mr Cooper – refer to Minute Number 078/09
Mr Skeet – refer to Minute Number 078/09
Mr Hyman – refer to Minute Number 078/09

Mr Hyman - refer to Minute Number 080/09

C 077/09 TOWN MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor reminded Members that the Christmas Lights 'Switch On' would be taking place on Saturday 28 November 2009, in Gostrey Meadow.

Members were asked if they could contribute prizes to the tombola in aid of the Brightwells Gostrey Centre, which would be taking place at the 'Switch On'.

The Town Mayor also added that the person selected to switch on the Christmas Lights for 2009 would be the person who won the fancy dress competition which would be held at the 'Switch On'.

Part 1 – Items for Decision

C 078/09 EAST STREET RE-DEVELOPMENT

Prior to the commencement of this item on the agenda, the Town Mayor invited Members of the Public to make Statements, the following statements were made:

Mr Wilde – St James Terrace, Farnham.

"What effect will the burying of pylons at Riverside, the site where Brightwells Tennis Club is to be relocated, have on disturbing the recently discovered pollution and will you guarantee to impart the information to the public when it does become available in a full and open way by using more means of communication other than just a website."

Mr Cooper – Nutshell Lane, Farnham.

"Given that Waverley Borough Council has received over 6,000 objections to its plans for East Street, do you think that the circumstances are now right for you to reduce the scale and density of your scheme and to reinstate the community and leisure facilities so valued by the people of Farnham".

Mr Skeet – Farnham Resident

"Would like to draw the attention of Town Councillors to the concerns of many local residents with the position of Crest Nicholson over the relocation of Brightwells tennis club and associated car parking at the Riverside site, it remains unclear particularly in view of the possible risks from pollution on the site and possible remedial costs".

Mr Hyman – Alfred Road, Farnham.

"With respect to the East Street Development the consent that was granted for this application in August of this year did not provide the data required by the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive in two respects, specifically the flood level in South Street, the flood risk was assessed on the basis that the footpaths either side of Montrose House do not exist, which is a glaring error.

This will cause problems when it comes to the purchase and conveyancing of the ground floor flats, in particular, because the wrong flood level has been set and the wrong amount of flood compensation has also been included in the plans. The other data that is missing is the rephrasing of the lights at the Royal Deer and Crest Nicholson themselves admit that, their traffic proposals will grid lock the town to the extent that people will park in the extremities and walk in to town because it is much quicker to do so and that 14% of traffic coming in down Castle Street will come all the way round down Upper Hale road because it will be quicker to do so.

These problems do not go away just because consent has been granted so will Crest Nicholson please tell us whether they are going to put in another planning application that corrects these matters".

Members received a presentation from Mr Greg Vincent from Crest Nicholson regarding the future plans for the East Street re-development. The following points were made by Mr Vincent:

The 106 Agreement has been agreed and signed by Crest Nicholson.

No further action had taken place regarding the Riverside works, Crest Nicholson were not aware of any further pollution other than that shown in the contamination reports.

As and when works commenced at Riverside, the Requirements and Conditions stated in the agreement with Waverley Borough Council was that a full investigation and remediation would take place. Any information that came out of the investigations would be made available.

Demolition works had taken place on some of the buildings such as the former health centre, which had become a health hazard due to vermin. The site would be tidied up, made more attractive and safe before work commenced on the site.

Crest Nicholson have been working with Waverley Borough Council on footpath diversions and traffic orders and with Surrey County Council on traffic regulations and the Section 278 traffic agreements.

Crest Nicholson have been looking at the definitive issues with the management of traffic on the site with the major contractor in terms of how the planning would go ahead and how the impact would be reduced.

Some of the proposals would be tabled on how the traffic management would work over the following weeks.

Crest Nicholson have been in talks with the owners of the Woolmead in order to make improvements to the overall structure and to the possible acquisition of that land. The talks were being conducted through Waverley Borough Council.

J Sainsbury's are working with Crest Nicholson to make improvements to the existing car park and access and the front of the existing Sainsbury's store (a copy of the proposals is **attached to record minutes**).

The proposals for the improvements to the car park and shop frontage will be submitted to Waverley Borough Council as planning proposals as they were not included in the planning application that had received permission.

The improvements would include a new stair, new lifts, better lighting and signage.

Crest Nicholson proposed that the traffic improvements would be carried out before work started on the site because it would help traffic movement and management.

Crest Nicholson were talking to prospective tenants for the commercial premises on the East Street site. Discussions had taken place with companies such as Next, River Island, H&M for 10 to 20,000 sq ft units. Discussions had also taken place with affordable luxury outlets such as Karen Millen, Hobbs, Jack Wills, Holister etc. Some of the units may be divided up into smaller units to allow smaller, independent retailers to come into the site.

Mr Vincent confirmed that Crest Nicholson had had approaches from funders for the shopping centre.

Cambridge place has come on to the market and vendors have shown an interest. Vendors are attracted to Farnham as a town it has a good rent profile with growth potential.

Crest Nicholson has been refinanced which was arranged with bankers and investors.

Crest Nicholson has opened up 3 new sites in the last 2 months in Crawley, Southampton and Milton Keynes.

Following the presentation Members of Farnham Town Council, were invited by the Mayor to ask Mr Vincent questions.

Cllr Maines asked whether Crest Nicholson had given up on the plans to access the site from the A31 bypass which would help relieve the traffic congestion in the town whilst the development was being built.

Mr Vincent replied that the plans had not been given up they had been fully researched and would be part of the proposals going for consideration to Waverley Borough Council.

Cllr O'Grady asked whether any thought been given to the provision of more affordable retailers and retailers for younger people, within the development?

Mr Vincent replied that Crest Nicholson had had discussions with New Look.

Cllr Maines stated that fashions were changing with regard to what people were looking for when purchasing properties, were crest Nicholson keeping an eye on this situation?

Mr Vincent confirmed that Crest Nicholson monitored the situation closely. They had approaches from Care Home operators about whether there was any potential for the Care Home type of accommodation within the development.

Mr Vincent confirmed that it might be possible to make alterations to some of the accommodation blocks to alter the types of accommodation.

Cllr Storey expressed his concern about the number of multiples that had been mentioned and Farnham about becoming a clone town. He asked whether space would be reserved in the scheme for one off retail outlets.

Mr Vincent confirmed that Crest Nicholson had been looking at a block of units at the entrance of the scheme by Sainsbury's to reconfigure the unit into much smaller units which would be more affordable for local retailers.

Cllr Steel asked who were the two largest shareholders in Crest Nicholson.

Mr Vincent replied that he did not know for certain however, he believed there were about 25 banks and HBOS and Lloyds TSB were probably the major share holders.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr Vincent for coming to the Council meeting, making the presentation and answering questions.

C 079/09 FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL DRAFT BUDGET 2010/2011

Members received a report and recommendations from the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group on the Draft budget for 2010/2011.

Cllr Ward, as Lead Member of the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group introduced the draft Budget for 2010/2011.

Cllr Ward explained the main changes in the 2010/2011 Budget from the previous 2009/2010 Budget.

He explained that more funds had been allocated to the Website; it was being well used and required further development.

The Rent had risen by £4,000 however this included the provision of space for the new reception area.

The Grants had been reduced in line with the Town Council's policy to reduce the major grants by 20% each year.

The Bank interest had gone down dramatically from the budget 2009/2010 due to the current economic climate.

A loan of £82,000 outstanding on which the Town Council was paying 8.12% interest. It was the recommendation of the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group that the loan be paid off out of Reserves, which would reduce the current budget.

More money was being put in to Farnham in Bloom as it was rolled out to include the villages.

Allotment income had risen slightly, there were more allotments now provided at the Shepherd and Flock and Farnborough Road sites.

An additional £14,000 had been provided in the budget for Events. More events would be provided in 2010 and £7,500 of the budget was to pay staff for working at events.

Income had risen from Cemeteries, sadly as there was a greater demand for the services.

Cllr Ward commended the budget and asked Members to approve the £878,739, which was less than last 2009/2010 budget by £48,000. Cllr Ward confirmed that the Town Council was providing more services for less cost and he commended the hard work of the officers.

Cllr Le Gal asked about Community Safety, whether the estimate for it was high and whether anything could be shaved off that figure.

The Town Clerk responded that a new CCTV system was being installed which would allow more cameras to be monitored at any one time however this meant there would be higher costs for maintenance and higher rental costs with a new five year agreement with BT Redcare.

Cllr Le Gal asked whether an adequate increase had been factored with the rising cost of electricity and heating.

She also asked whether the 1.1% increase in cost of living for salaries was due to Farnham Town Council being in the National Scheme as she was aware that Surrey County Council and Waverley Borough Council had frozen pay increases.

The Town Clerk responded that it was believed that the heating and electricity costs could be maintained at the current level because insulation was being increased.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council was in the National Pay Award Scheme and the 1.1% was the projected increase in line with the consumer price index increase. However, the Town Council did not know what the outcome of any negotiations might be.

Cllr Le Gal asked about the Pension Payment contributions and the estimated amount and which authority had approved the increase.

The Town Clerk confirmed that it was Surrey County Council.

Cllr Le Gal asked whether any saving could be made on the postage, stationery and photocopying charges.

The Town Clerk explained the increases were due to the cost of postage increasing and that the photocopier was now rented and the Town Council paid copier charges.

Cllr Storey commented that the Town Council had taken the decision in the past that its services such as allotments and cemeteries ought to break even. The figures that were in the budget did not include the staff costs, did the Town Clerk know whether the services were beginning to break even.

Cllr Cockburn replied that the costs were reducing in terms of the Cemeteries Service however; there would always be maintenance costs. The aim was to achieve the balance between the provision of the service and the maintenance of the cemeteries.

Cllr Ward confirmed that the Cemeteries would never make a profit or break even.

Cllr Maines made a general observation that care ought to be taken with regard to reducing grants and taking away money from organisations that provide events and then the Town Council putting on those events.

Cllr Maines also asked about the Blackwater Countryside Management Group and why their subscription had not been paid.

The Town Clerk explained that the invoice had only just been received by the Council but would be paid shortly.

Cllr Cockburn clarified that the Town Council had decided, three years ago to reduce the larger grants by 20% each year. A huge percentage of the precept about 13% was then being spent on grants.

Cllr Cockburn confirmed that warning had been given to all those organisations that the Town Council would reduce the grants.

When it came to making the decisions on the grants for this year, there had been a long debate, some Members did think that the Farnham Citizens Advice Bureau was in a different position, but having guaranteed something to three other organisations the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group agreed that the figures could not be manipulated at that stage.

Reluctantly the Working Group took the decision to treat all the grant applicants the same.

Cllr Steel commented that it was a good and sensible budget and reflected the difficult financial times. Cllr Steel reminded Members that it was only the residents of Farnham that contributed towards the Precept, not the commercial organisations.

Cllr Steel also commented that he did not think that the Town Council should allow its reserves to fall.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To agree the Draft Budget for 2010/2011 (at a net operating cost of £878,739) (Consolidated Budget attached to record minutes).**
- 2. To approve a grant of £2000 to the Farnham Maltings in 2009 for toilet refurbishments.**
- 3. To agree a settlement figure of £108,145 for the outstanding balance of the loan and be paid from General Reserves.**

C 080/09 PROTECTING FARNHAM AND THE CONSIDERATION OF SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREEN SPACES (SANGS)

Before the Members considered this Item, Mr Hyman made the following statement:

There were a couple of misconceptions with regard to SANGS. It was a very complicated issue.

If an area met all the requirements of a SANGS already, then it could not be used as a SANGS, because it could not be improved.

Natural England stated that a green space that currently met the standards within the delivery plan should be discounted as mitigation and green space which could be significantly upgraded to improve its attractiveness and or carrying capacity therefore could be used as mitigation once the improvements had been made.

From the list of possible SANGS that Waverley Borough Council had suggested the land to the East of Farnham Park was the improvable one and being of genuine use and possibly the best option.

In the Habitats Directive the existence of Article 64 gives Farnham what it wanted – limited development in Farnham under local control, through the Europe test.

Members were asked to consider the current position regarding the allocation of SANGS in Farnham and to consider any further action by the Town Council.

The Town Mayor asked Cllr Cockburn to introduce the item.

Cllr Cockburn explained that the Town Council did not have any responsibility for SANGS but it did have a responsibility to protect Farnham and to make sure that the Town Council's views were put across to Waverley Borough Council in the strongest possible way. This was very important as a consultation on SANGS had just been completed and suggestions for SANGS were going forward to the Executive Committee and Full Council.

The issue of the water meadows had been taken to the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group for discussion and the issue of SANGS and development was linked.

Cllr Cockburn asked Members consider how the Town Council could ensure that the Town Council's comments that had been sent to Waverley Borough Council, were strong enough and were sent to as many people as possible.

Cllr Cockburn was concerned that Waverley Borough Council had not taken into consideration the comments that Farnham Town Council had submitted. She urged the Council to reiterate its comments.

Cllr Cockburn asked if through the Town Mayor, the Council would consider resending its comments and send them to every Waverley Borough Councillor and some of the strategic officers. It would be the only way to ensure that every single Waverley Borough Councillor would read the Town Council's comments.

Cllr Beel agreed that it was a good idea to send the Town Councils comments to all Waverley Borough Councillors.

The Town Mayor suggested that Farnham Town Council use the same campaign that had been used for the Farnborough Aerodrome, to write to every Waverley Borough Councillor. The Town Mayor suggested that she liaise with the Town Councils officers, to write a strongly worded letter to all Waverley Borough Councillors and strategic officers, stressing what Farnham Town Council thought about the consultation and the allocation of SANGS.

Cllr Steel urged all Farnham Town Councillors who were also Waverley Borough Councillors to help get the message across to fellow Waverley Borough Councillors and to speak at the forthcoming Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Mayor liaise with Town Council officers to write a strongly worded letter to all Waverley Borough Councillors, reiterating the Town Council's comments on the recent Waverley Borough Council SANGS consultation.

C 081/09 MINERALS TASK GROUP

Farnham Town Council received notification of a Consultation on the Surrey Minerals Plan.

Members noted that the closing date for the consultation was 18 December 2009.

Members were requested to consider the appointment of a minimum of three Members to form a Minerals Task Group to respond to the consultation on behalf of Farnham Town Council.

Resolved: That Cllr D Attfield, Cllr D Le Gal and Cllr S O'Grady be appointed to the Minerals Task Group to respond to Surrey County Council's Consultation on the Surrey Minerals Plan on behalf of Farnham Town Council.

C 082/09 FARNHAM TRANSPORTATION TASK GROUP

Members were asked to consider the appointment of a Farnham Town Councillor as a representative on the Farnham Transportation Task Group.

Resolved: That Cllr A Lovell be appointed as Farnham Town Council's representative on the Farnham Transportation Task Group.

C 083/09 SERVICES TO FARNHAM AWARDS

Members were asked to adopt the principle of a 'Services to Farnham' Award as a result of a donation by Sir Ray Tindle and to approve the draft Terms of Reference (**attached to record minutes**).

Resolved: That the Services to Farnham Awards and the Terms of Reference be agreed.

Part 2 – Items Noted

C 084/09 APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNOR FOR POTTERS' GATE SCHOOL

Members noted a letter concerning the appointment of a Governor for Potters' Gate School.

It was agreed that a letter of thanks would be written in reply.

C 085/09 WORKING GROUP NOTES

Members received the notes of the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group held on 21 September 2009 – **notes attached to record minutes.**

Members received the notes of the Cemeteries Appeals and Working Group meeting held on 10 September 2009 – **notes attached to record minutes.**

Members received the notes of the Tourism and Events Working Group meeting held on 16 September 2009 – **notes attached to record minutes.**

Members received the notes of the Farnham in Bloom Working Group meeting held on 24 September 2009 – **notes attached to record minutes.**

Members received the notes of the Farnham Design Statement Task Group meeting held on 15 September 2009 – **notes attached to record minutes.**

C 086/09 REPORTS FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received a verbal report from Cllr D Le Gal regarding the refurbishment works at the Farnham Maltings. Cllr Le Gal reported that the works were progressing well.

C 087/09 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members received the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Consultative Group held on, 27 August, 10 September, 24 September, 15 October and 29 October 2009.

RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on 27 August, 10 September, 24 September, 15 October and 29 October 2009, and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.50pm.

Date

Chairman