



FARNHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes Full Council

Time and date

7.00pm on Thursday 8 January 2009

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
- * Cllr C Cockburn
- * Cllr V Duckett
- * Cllr (Mrs) P Frost
- * Cllr R Frost
- * Cllr C Genziani
- * Cllr G Hargreaves
- * Cllr S Hill
- * Cllr D Le Gal (arrived 7.07pm)
- * Cllr A Lovell
- * Cllr J Maines
- * Cllr S O'Grady
- * Cllr R Steel
- * Cllr C Storey
- * Cllr A Thorp (arrived 7.07pm)
- o 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)
Kevin Tait (Grounds & Services Manager)

Prior to the start of the meeting a short presentation was given by Dr Penny Marriott of the Andernach Town Twinning Association.

Dr Marriott gave a brief overview of the Association and explained that although membership had increased to. There was still a need to recruit more members and to highlight the Twinning Work. Dr Marriott asked the Council to consider the future role of the Council in Twinning.

The Town Mayor Cllr Beel thanked Dr Marriott for her presentation and suggested that the Town Clerk co-ordinate a discussion.

C 106/08 QUESTIONS BY THE PUBLIC

There were no questions by the public.

C 107/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Ward and D Attfield

C 108/08 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Farnham Town Council meeting held on 11 December 2008 were signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

C 109/08 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

Name of Councillor	Agenda/ Minute No	Subject	Type of Interest	Reason
G Beel	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
C Cockburn	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
V Duckett	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
L Fleming	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
B Frost	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
G Hargreaves	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
S Hill	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
D Le Gal	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Portfolio Holder for Property for Waverley Borough Council
A Lovell	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
S O'Grady	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham Grants - Hoppa	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
R Steel	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
A Thorp	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor
P. Frost	9	Purchase of Council Offices, South Street, Farnham Grants - Hoppa and transport	Personal	Waverley Borough Councillor

C 110 /08 STATEMENTS BY THE PUBLIC

There were no statements by the public.

C 111/08 TOWN MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Town Mayor wished Council Members a Happy New Year and thanked all those who had baked cakes for her stall at the Christmas Farmers' Market. £229.40 was raised for the Mayor's Charity. The Mayor wished to give special thanks to Mrs Anne Atfield for all her help on the morning of the market.

The Town Mayor also reminded Members that 6 March 2009 was the provisional date for the reception for Rachel Morris – awaiting confirmation from Rachel with regard to her training schedule.

Part 1 – Items for Decision

C 111/08 GRANTS – WAVERLEY HOPPA COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

Members considered a Grant Application from the Waverley Hoppa Community Transport.

Members discussed the grant application from Waverley HOPPA Community Transport and agreed that the previous grants policy of the Council should be followed and the HOPPA grant should also be reduced by 20% in accordance and with Council's earlier notifications, with all applications received for 2009/2010.

Cllr O'Grady proposed Waverly Hoppa Community Transport be awarded a Grant of £16,000 which was seconded by Cllr Le Gal

Resolved: That Waverley Hoppa Community Transport be awarded £16,000 for the year 2009/2010.

C 113/08 BUDGET (PRECEPT)

Members received a report on the Budget and Precept for 2009/2010. The report included Precept Options and Budget details.

The Town Mayor reminded Members that Farnham Town Council had agreed the budget at the last Council meeting and Members needed to decide how to fund the Budget. The Town Mayor reminded Members that as the bank rate had reduced again, the Council would be affected as well as businesses in the town. The Town Mayor read out a statement regarding the Council's Precept from Councillor Ward, who was unable to attend the meeting, requesting Members to consider setting Precept to finance the agreed budget.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the budget had been agreed at £943,963.

Capital items totalling £51,500 for replacement had been agreed including a ride on mower, creation of a Garden of Reflection and Christmas Lights infrastructure which would be paid out of earmarked reserves.

Therefore £892,463 would need to be funded from other sources including the precept.

The Town Clerk explained that the tax base was based on the average number of band D households in Farnham and this had increased slightly for 2009/2010.

The Town Clerk informed Members that a decision on the Precept was required at the meeting in order to comply with Waverley Borough Council's requirements for the Budget Precept calculation.

Members discussed the most appropriate level of increase for the Council Precept.

Members discussed the current economic climate and that the Farnham residents may not understand the Council Budget and Precept in the context of the overall council tax bill which they receive.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that the Council had agreed the Budget for 2009/2010 and that consideration should be made for other sources of funding and whether funding should be taken from Reserves.

Members asked the Town Clerk for clarification on the percentage increase of the Precept in 2008/2009.

Town Clerk explained that the Precept had increased for two consecutive years by 2.5%. He reminded Members that Town and Parish Councils were not capped on precept increases like principle authorities, Central Government expected Town and Parish Council Precepts to be set to pay for their services they provided.

Cllr Steel proposed that Council should utilise reserves and raise the Precept by 5.75%.

The Town Mayor asked if there were any amendments to the proposal

Cllr O'Grady proposed 3% as an alternative which was seconded by Cllr Lovell.

Members discussed whether the Precept should be increased by 3%.

The Town Mayor asked Members whether there was an amendment to the amendment.

Cllr Thorp proposed 4.5% as an amendment which was seconded by Cllr B Frost

Members discussed the increase of 4.5%.

The Town Clerk clarified that the first vote for the amendment proposed by Cllr Thorp and seconded by Cllr B Frost was for a Precept of £883,811, an increase of 4.5% on the precept.

A vote was taken, 6 for and 7 against 3 abstentions and the amendment was lost. Members then considered the amendment proposed by Cllr O'Grady and seconded by Cllr Lovell for a Precept of £866,976, an increase of 3% on the precept.

A vote was taken, 7 for and 4 against, 5 abstentions

Members of Council then voted on the substantial motion that the Precept for 2009/10 would be £866,976, which would be an increase of additional cost of 2p per week to the average Band D tax holder

A vote was taken, 13 for 2 against 1 abstention

Resolved: That the Precept for 2009/2010 be agreed at £866,976 (Eight Hundred and Sixty Six Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy Six Pounds).

C 114 /08 CEMETERY FOOTPATHS

Members received a report identifying three quotes for the repair of cemetery footpaths in Hale, Green Lane and Badshot Lea Cemeteries.

Quote B was discussed by Members and Mr Taitt the Grounds and Services Manager was asked whether he considered Quote B would be suitable.

Mr Taitt explained that Quote B was in his opinion the best option. Vehicles did not use the footpaths and roots from the trees would be cleared so that they did not damage the footpaths.

Members agreed that Quote B was the best option. However, Mr Taitt was asked to clarify whether there were any tree preservation orders on the trees that were damaging the footpaths.

Mr Taitt replied that there were no tree preservation orders in the cemeteries.

Cllr O'Grady proposed Quote B should be accepted and this was seconded by Cllr Le Gal.

A vote was taken, 12 for 2 against 2 abstentions.

Resolved: That Quote B be accepted for the repair of the footpaths in Hale, Green Lane and Badshot Lea Cemeteries and officers be instructed to proceed with the engagement of the Contractor.

C 115/08

COUNCIL OFFICES – PROJECT OVERVIEW

Members received a report on the Council Offices, Project Overview, regarding the possible redesign of the reception area in the South Street Offices to allow Farnham Town Council to have a reception area and further office space.

Cllr Fleming reported to Members the work that the Working Group had undertaken since the previous Council meeting. Cllrs Genziani, Attfield, Fleming and three Officers had visited the Princes Hall in Aldershot to view their newly installed reception, incorporating a space for wheelchair access. .

Cllr Lovell asked whether there was provision in the Budget for the provision of a reception area for the Town Council.

The Town Clerk explained there were reserves earmarked for the Project.

Cllr Fleming asked Members to consider the report. She reminded members that new staff would be starting work within the month, one member of staff had already returned from maternity leave and it was now a very serious problem. There was a budget of £20,000 in reserves for the work to be carried out.

Members discussed the report and the proposals from Cllr Fleming. The Town Clerk was asked whether the budgeted reserves included monies for new furniture.

The Town Clerk confirmed that there was some funding in the current budget for furniture. The £20,000 was expected to be sufficient for the project, but a quote for the roller shutter at the front of reception and a cost for sound screens for the office area was still required. .

Members commented that a figure of £13,500 had previously been discussed and Cllr Fleming was asked why the budget had been increased to £20,000.

Cllr Fleming explained that the roller shutter had been added. Previously it had been thought a half shutter would have been adequate, but having seen the shutter at the Princes Hall in Aldershot it was thought a ceiling to floor shutter would provide better security.

Cllr Fleming proposed the design as included in the report;

To delegate to the Working Group authority to obtain 3 quotes

To delegate to the Working Group the authority to set up and choose the most appropriate quote using best value principles and instruct the work to be completed.

To authorise the Town Clerk to obtain a variation to the Council Lease and to allocate a budget of up to £20,000 from earmarked reserves for the project.

Cllr Fleming also explained that there was a pressing need to organise temporary staff accommodation.

The proposal by Cllr Fleming was seconded by Cllr Steel.

Cllr Cockburn then asked for clarification as to what had been proposed and seconded

The Town Mayor repeated the proposal to Members.

Cllr Cockburn said she was unhappy with the proposal and asked for more details. She went on to say that she had no problem with the concept, however the Working Group should get quotes for the work to be undertaken. She suggested the quotes and proposals should be brought back to Council for consideration.

Cllr P Frost agreed with Cllr Cockburn that it would have been helpful to receive the proposals before the meeting. She agreed in principle but suggested that the details were too brief and would prefer to see proper plans rather than 2 sketches.

Cllr P Frost also suggested that the Working Group obtain quotes, but suggested that the proposals be brought back to Council for consideration. She suggested that the temporary staff accommodation was a decision for the Town Clerk.

Cllr Thorp agreed that the Working Group should obtain quotes for the work to be carried out, but that the Council should receive the proposals and make a decision once the correct information was received.

Members discussed the movement of staff currently located in the downstairs office.

The Town Clerk explained that the movement of staff was required for Health and Safety reasons. Further space was needed for staff.

Members suggested that the decision about the temporary staff accommodation remain with the Town Clerk.

Resolved: That the concept (attached to record minutes) be agreed.

To delegate authority to obtain 3 quotes, this was seconded by Cllr Steel.

Resolved: That the Working Group be authorised to obtain three quotes for the work to be undertaken.

To authorise Town Clerk to obtain variation on Council's Lease to rent additional accommodation, this was seconded by Cllr O'Grady

Resolved: That the Town Clerk obtain a variation to the Town Council's current lease to rent additional accommodation.

Possible Purchase/Transfer of South Street Offices

Cllr Thorp presented a report from the Transfer of Assets Working Group following the set up of the Working Group regarding the potential investment decision to acquire the council building.

The report set out:

- The Terms of Reference
- Budgetary associations and implications.
- Preliminary timetable to outline the approach was also attached, together with an outline budget. The figures included were subject to change and the monies may not be completely utilised.
- Surveys to date and information available from Waverley Borough Council were incomplete. A good understanding of the condition of building was required to avoid putting too greater a burden on Council.
- The services of legal advisors would need to be procured together with financial advice. The information gathering would need to be completed by the end of March.
- The week commencing the 26 January 2009 had been identified for the Working Group to produce a draft brief
- Members Workshop would be held to assist the Working Group to complete the Project Brief.

Members discussed the report and the merits of the purchase of the building. Cllr Thorp was asked to comment upon the possible purchase.

Cllr Thorp replied to achieve any investment a relatively high level options appraisal needed to be completed.

Cllr Lovell asked if in 1974 the Urban District council owned the building and transferred it to Waverley at nil cost. Cllr Lovell also asked for clarification on a report that he had read regarding the transfer of assets to local authorities at nil cost, and whether this was correct.

The Town Clerk replied that the Asset had been funded by the Urban District Council and under local government re-organisation the building was transferred to the new authority at nil cost as were all assets linked to Urban District Council.

The report that Cllr Lovell had referred to was the Quirk report, an advisory document from the Home Office which contained certain recommendations on transferring community assets and reasons for transferring assets were set out. The report suggested that assets could be transferred and local authorities had the power to do so. A nil cost option was one option to be considered.

Members asked what the negotiation strategy would be.

Cllr Thorp replied that the negation strategy would depend on Waverley Borough Council's approach.

The Town Clerk reminded Members that Council was requested to identify the indicative budget for works to be done.

Members asked for clarification on staffing costs for the project.

The Town Clerk clarified that staff costs were included within the budget and no additional costs from staffing budget were anticipated. Staff responsibilities had been reallocated Mrs Gordon would take over Committee Administration until the end of April and Miss Coulter would be the Project Officer.

Resolved: That the Terms of Reference and associated conditions be agreed as identified in the report, attached to record minutes, be agreed.

The Town Clerk brought Members attention to two points to note which were critical to the project. On 19th February 2009 an additional Council meeting would be held to update Council on the progress of the Project and the Council meeting which would have been held on 19 March would now be moved to 25 March 2009 subject to confirmation

C 116/08 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

Members received and information report on amendments to the Freedom of Information Act.

The Town Mayor explained that the Freedom of Information Act was a legal requirement and must be adopted.

The Town Clerk explained that most of the information would be supplied without charge on the website and charges would only be made when paper copies were requested.

Resolved: That the amendments to the Freedom of Information Act be agreed.

C 117/08 SURREY RURAL PARTNERSHIP – RURAL STRATEGY REVIEW 2008/2009

Members received a report on the Surrey Rural Partnership – Rural Strategy Review 2008/2009 consultation.

The Town Mayor explained that the consultation would be considered by the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group and all Members could attend the meeting.

Members agreed that the Corporate Development and Audit Working Group consider and make comments on the consultation but that the Town Council should make specific comments about housing, transport, lack of parking and minerals and waste.

The Town Clerk suggested that it would be helpful if Members could circulate any observations to him by the 19 January before the Corporate Development meeting. An email reminder would be sent out to all Members.

C 118/08 SPRING FESTIVAL

The Town Clerk explained that the report was for Members' comments and observations to decide where the market would be held in 2009.

Cllr Fleming proposed that the Spring Festival Market be held in Gostrey Meadow in 2009 to be reviewed for 2010, this was seconded by Cllr Steel.

Members agreed that the Market should be held in Gostrey Meadow in 2009, due to the downturn in the current economic climate.

The main decision was the location of the Spring Market, whether it would be held in Downing Street or Gostrey Meadow. A plan for consideration was included in the report.

Resolved: That the Spring Festival Market be held in Gostrey Meadow in 2009 with the location to be reviewed for 2010.

C 119/08 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted at Agenda item 16 receiving a confidential report on Cemetery Health and Safety Issues, it was advisable in the public interest that the public and press be temporarily excluded and they were instructed to withdraw at item 16.

Part 2 – Items Noted

C 120/08 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Members received the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Consultative Group held on:
18 December 2008

RESOLVED: That the observations made by the Planning Consultative Group held on 18 December 2008 and dealt with in accordance with delegated authority, be noted.

C 121/08 REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

Members received and noted reports from Outside Bodies.

C 122/08 ITEMS TABLED

None

Part 3 – Confidential Items

C 123/08 CEMETERY HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

Members received a confidential report on Health and Safety issues.

The Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.17pm.

Date

Chairman