



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXTRA ORDINARY COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING

held on
Friday 31st July 2020

PRESENT

Councillors: R. Schofield (Chairman), G. Carpenter, P. Einchcomb, L. Holt, A. Hope, K. Jasper, A. Oliver, S. Tilley, P. Wildsmith, G. Woods.

Also Present:

Janet Stanton - Town Clerk
Susanna Walker - Committee Clerk
Charlotte Benham - Project and Committee Officer
Councillor Steve Forster - HCC

Councillor Schofield welcomed everyone to the meeting and outlined the voting procedure. Members were reminded that The Harlington remains closed, due to the essential maintenances on the auditorium ceiling. These are now expected to finish mid to late August.

Councillor Schofield outlined an event taking place in August, titled 'Harlington Outside'. Members noted that this is an outside event to be held on The Views every Sunday from 9th-30th August, from 12:00-16:00. These events will be fully social distanced, free of charge and will feature local artists playing acoustic sets. A bar and limited food will be available. Publicity material will be available on social media and a flyer will be sent out with Town Talk on 4th August 2020.

EFC July 2020 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillor Ashworth and Councillor Chenery.

EFC July 2020 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Oliver declared that he had an interest in Item 4, Covid19 Fleet Road Pedestrianisation.

EFC July 2020 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

EFC July 2020 ITEM 4

COVID19 FLEET ROAD PEDESTRIANISATION

Members received and considered documentation on Fleet Road Pedestrianisation. Members were made aware that Hart District Council approved the Fleet Road Pedestrianisation Scheme at its Council Meeting on Thursday 30th July 2020. Councillor Schofield outlined the following matters:

- HDC needs to secure support for the pedestrianisation proposal.
- LEP requires evidence of funding support from the main stakeholders – Fleet BID and FTC.
- Communication from HDC to FTC regarding this was delayed, and the earliest opportunity for FTC to formally discuss this was Friday 31st July 2020.
- HDC has requested the following from FTC:
 - Support for Phase three – enhancement of the Fleet Road Pedestrianisation to include a contribution of £10,000.00.
- FTC would work with Fleet BID and HDC to make the town a Covid safe place and create an area of interest.
- With the scheme, HDC needs to find the balance between supporting the shops and traffic concerns of the local residents.
- The scheme can be withdrawn with 3 days' notice, should the benefits not be realised.
- Traffic would be monitored and measured, looking at any impacts or issues to nearby streets. This data would provide information to allow modifications where necessary.
- High street shopping is changing; there is now a café / leisure culture, and pedestrianisation enables the town to be more community and entertainment focussed, whilst still encouraging footfall into the town.
- Some evidence of pedestrianisation in other towns before Covid19 indicated there was little benefit to retailers, but increased footfall with visitors socialising through greater use of coffee shops, bars and restaurants.

Members were further asked to support funding of up to £10,000.00 to implement some early schemes and events to make the open space more attractive at an early stage and attract more residents into the town centre before the full implementation of Stage 3. Any proposals would be developed in collaboration with Fleet BID.

Members noted the above and made the following points:

- The Fleet Road Pedestrianisation Scheme is designed to make people feel safe.
- Although there is an impact to local residents, the scheme allows the opportunity to adapt and change.
- Is the first wave of £10,000.00 funding conditional to HDC's scheme?
- Communication from HDC to local residents has been poor.
- The road diversion works in the proposed scheme are the only detailed plans so far, as the scheme is in the early stages of development.
- LEP Phase three developments begin once the road closures are in place.
- Concerns that closed roads will not entice people into Fleet Town Centre.
- The lead officer for the scheme is Mark Jaggard, Head of Place at HDC.
- The timescale for the scheme has been tight, and there has not been the opportunity for communication to local businesses and residents.
- The proposed date for road closure is Monday 24th August 2020, with a possibility of it being brought forward.
- FTC needs to work with HDC to make the scheme a success.
- Minimise the time between the road closure and the plans to make Fleet Road feel Covid safe and comfortable for people.
- Should the scheme be made permanent, a proper consultation would take place with businesses and residents.
- How can the impact on local residents be mitigated?
- Redirected traffic will impact other roads.
- The cost of the improvement scheme is £148,000.00.
- Fleet Road will be traffic accessible between Branksomewood Road and Santander as it is an access point for businesses, but with staggered bollards to discourage traffic and give full access to pedestrians.
 - Concerns that this area breaks up the pedestrianisation.
 - Investigation as to whether car access could be through Birchayes Car Park.

- Land outside Birchayes Car Park is not Council owned.
- Staggered barriers would be put in place allowing emergency vehicle access.
- Buses and taxis will not be able to drop passengers off outside shops.
- This is a tremendous opportunity for the town centre, and HDC, FTC and Fleet BID should make every effort to make it a success.
- Fleet needs to be progressive as a town and pedestrianisation is an opportunity to see what could happen.

RESOLVED

Members approved to:

1. Lend support to Phase three – enhancement of the Fleet Road Pedestrianisation including a contribution of £10,000.00.
2. Further funding of £10,000.00 to assist with early schemes/events to make the pedestrian area more welcoming and attract more residents into the town centre.

EFC July 2020 ITEM 5

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next virtual meeting of the Council is scheduled for Wednesday 2nd September 2020 at 7pm.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 8.10pm.

Signed.....

Date:.....

Chairman

Part 3 CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS

Under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 Exclusion of the public in accordance with Section 1(2) and by reason of the confidential nature of the business of the Town Council, the Public and Press will be excluded from the Meeting

The following types of business will be treated as confidential:

- a. Engagement, terms of service, conduct and dismissal of employees
- b. Terms of tenders, and proposals and counter-proposals in negotiations for contracts
- c. Receipt of professional legal advice and preparation of cases in legal proceedings
- d. The early stages of any dispute
- e. Matters of a Commercial nature

EFC July 2020 ITEM 6

A MATTER OF CONTRACT AND SECURITY

Members received an update on a matter of contract and security.

RESOLVED

To determine and approve the actions to be taken.