

**FLEET TOWN COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE FULL COUNCIL VIRTUAL MEETING**

held on

Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2020

**PRESENT**

**Councillors:** R. Schofield (Chairman), G. Carpenter, G. Chenery, P. Einchcomb, R. Harrison, R. Hill, L. Holt, A. Hope, K. Jasper, A. Oliver, D. Pierce, R. Robinson, S. Tilley, P. Wildsmith, G. Woods, J. Wright.

**Also Present:**

Janet Stanton - Town Clerk  
Susanna Walker - Committee Clerk  
Charlotte Benham - Project and Committee Officer  
Councillor John Bennison - HCC  
Councillor Steve Forster - HCC  
Mark Butcher  
Tyler Harman  
Robert Richmond  
Timothy Smart  
Ben Willcocks  
Charlotte Tickner - Sasha's Project  
Angela Forster - Sasha's Project

**FC November 2020 ITEM 1**

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies of absence.

**FC November 2020 ITEM 2**

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**FC November 2020 ITEM 3**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from the public.

Councillor Schofield briefed members on the following:

- **Second national lockdown** begins on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> November 2020 for 4 weeks.
- **Fleet High Street Pedestrianisation** has ended.
- **Lion's Bonfire Festivities** have been cancelled this year.
- **Remembrance Day Parade and Civic Service** has been cancelled.
  - There will be a small ceremony at the War Memorial.
  - This will be live streamed on HDC's Facebook page from 1055 and will finish at 1110.
  - The ceremony will be attended by 6 invited guests only.
  - Members of public are requested not to attend and participate in their own home, either through watching the HDC live stream or the live BBC1 coverage.
  - The Royal British Legion emphasised that remembrance is all year long.
- **Fleet Town Christmas Festivities** have been cancelled this year.

- **Fleet Road Christmas Lights Switch On** will hopefully take place on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020 but with no public present.
- **FTC Office** will be closed during the second lockdown.

#### **FC November 2020 ITEM 4                      MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Members noted and approved the minutes of Council held on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020, with an amendment on p4, Item 7 Budget 2021/2022 to read “Net loss of revenue from the closure of the Harlington is approximately £20,000.00 a month”. The minutes were signed by the Chairman. The Council also received the minutes of the following Committees:

Development Control	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2020
	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2020
Policy & Finance	19 <sup>th</sup> October 2020

Members noted that due to the closure of Fleet High Street Pedestrianisation, the allocated £20,000.00 would not be paid.

#### **FC November 2020 ITEM 5                      HCC / HDC UPDATE**

##### **HCC / HDC**

Councillor Bennison updated the members on the following:

- There will be no road closures for Remembrance Sunday.
- Members of public are requested not to attend the small ceremony.
- Household waste recycling centres will remain open during the second lockdown. Slots need to be booked for this.
- Country parks and car parks will remain open.
- Building sites and highways works will continue during lockdown.
- Hitches Lane lighting and tarmac work has been completed.
- Junction into the building site at Redfields Lane will be completed by the end of this week.
- There are ongoing discussions with HDC regarding the completion of a roundabout at this site.

Councillor Forster reported the following:

- Fleet High Street Pedestrianisation closure.
- Church Road is closed, with a diversion via Albert Street.
- There is a public enquiry into the planning application for the Old Police Station.
- HDC have implemented the new lockdown measures and restrictions, and look to engage, educate and then act where necessary.
- Buses will be reinstated along Fleet High Street, when the road reopens.

Councillor Oliver updated the members on the following:

- HDC intend to run all services during the second lockdown.
- Business grants.
- HCC Coronavirus and Support Line. Hub for clinically vulnerable is open Monday to Friday between 0900-1700, and Saturday and Sunday between 0900-1500.

#### **FC November 2020 ITEM 6                      CO-OPTION**

Further to the Casual Vacancy for the Central Ward having been advertised and 10 registered voters not coming forward to request a by-election, Council Members were given the option to co-opt a Councillor. In line with The Representation of the People Act 1985, members were asked to consider valid applications for co-option to Fleet Town Council from the following applicants:

- A. Mr Alex Bakker
- B. Mr Mark Butcher
- C. Mr Steven De Filippis
- D. Mr Tyler Harman
- E. Mr Robert Richmond
- F. Mr Timothy Smart
- G. Mr Ben Willcocks

Members were advised that Mr Steven De Filippis had withdrawn his application, and Mr Alex Bakker was unable to attend the meeting due to work commitments.

All candidates were given the opportunity to give a 2-minute presentation to elaborate on their application submission and themselves to the Full Council, with questions from members following each presentation. During the presentations, Mr Timothy Smart withdrew his application, therefore reducing the number of candidates to 5.

All candidates were thanked for their presentations and their enthusiasm and passion in standing for Councillor. The Chairman impressed upon all candidates to continue to support Fleet and FTC and to engage with FTC wherever possible. Members of the public and all external guests at the meeting were asked to leave the meeting, to allow the Full Council to vote securely.

#### **RESOLVED**

Members determined the applications for the vacancy of Councillor to Central Ward and voted to appoint Mr Robert Richmond to this role.

Members of the public and all external guests were allowed back into the virtual meeting, where the Chairman announced that Mr Robert Richmond was the successful candidate as co-opted Councillor. Thanks were given to all candidates for their presentations and participation in the meeting. Members noted that Mr Robert Richmond could join the Council's meetings from December 2020, once all the relevant papers had been signed.

#### **FC November 2020 ITEM 7 FINANCIAL YEAR 2021**

At the October Policy and Finance Committee, members reviewed the predicted income and expenditure for 2020/2021 and the effect COVID 19 would have on both this and future years' budgets and reserves. As a result of the review, members were advised that there would be a negative balance at the end of this year and a need to draw down on reserves in order to balance the budget.

Members were made aware that due to the implementation of the current lockdown, the minor programme of events at the Harlington had now been cancelled, subsequently changing the proposed end of year outcome. Therefore, the revised deficit at the end of the year is now approximately £191,000.00.

Members discussed the following:

- Possible suspension of FTC grants.
- Fleet High Street Pedestrianisation £20,000.00 allocation will not be paid. Only £500.00 of this has been spent.

#### **RESOLVED**

Members approved the use of the reserves to balance the 2020/2021 budget.

## **FC November 2020 ITEM 8**

## **BUDGET 2021/2022**

Further to the October Policy and Finance Committee, the members recommended approval of the 2021/2022 budget subject to there being no significant changes prior to the Council Meeting on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2021.

Members were made aware that the budget assumes that the Harlington operations will be restricted for another 6 months with a limited programme and then from October 2021, operations will be back to normal. Members noted that over the next 2 years, the deficit will use the general reserves and break into the earmarked reserves.

Members discussed the following:

- Harlington reserves will remain untouched.
- No Council Tax increase for residents.
- Councils are not allowed to go broke.
- Budget will be looked at and recast every month to be in line with Government COVID guidelines.
- Band D tax base unknown for 2021/2022.

### **RESOLVED**

Members approved the 2021/2022 budget, based on the following assumptions and with possible changes in the next few months:

- There will be no increase in Council Tax by Fleet Town Council.
- That any changes in COVID guidelines/restrictions affecting the budget will be considered again at the 6th January 2021 Council Meeting when the Precept is set.
- Final adjustments to be made once Band D Tax Base released by HDC.

## **FC November 2020 ITEM 9**

## **GRANT APPLICATION**

Members received and considered a grant application from Sasha's Project, to hire the POINT short term on a Saturday night between 2200-0600, to use as a drop-in centre for young people aged 16-25 experiencing mental health issues.

Members noted the following:

- The project is not for profit.
- Sasha's Project is a safe place for young people with mental health issues.
- Short term hire, enabling Sasha's Project to raise funds to support a crisis home.
- Safeguarding and leadership is in place.
- Cost to run is approximately £80 per night.
- Drop-in centre and referrals from local services.
- Communication in the community, through emergency services, local networks etc.

Members agreed that the contribution from FTC is minimal compared to the amount of time given by the people in the project, and that the well-being of young people is paramount.

### **RESOLVED**

Members approved the grant application from Sasha's Project for the hire of the POINT one night per week. The project to be supported until the end of the financial year, when FTC would reassess the situation.

## **FC November 2020 ITEM 10**

## **THE HARLINGTON**

Members noted that the maintenance of the roof and ceiling space in the Auditorium has now been completed. Staff members have also taken the opportunity to freshen up and redecorate the front of house and the Auditorium. However, due to the second lockdown, the Harlington has had to shut again and cancel the limited programme for the next 4 weeks.

**FC November 2020 ITEM 11**

**COVID19 UPDATE**

Members received the COVID19 update report, noting the following:

- FTC is following current government guidelines and the office, and the Harlington are closed.
- Most Staff will be working from home except where the work cannot be done from home
- The Offices and The Harlington will reopen in December following lockdown.

**FC November 2020 ITEM 12**

**COMPLAINTS**

Members noted the complaints received and were made aware that all complaints have been dealt with.

**FC November 2020 ITEM 13**

**TOWN CLERK'S REPORT**

Members received and noted an update from the Town Clerk. The following matters were discussed:

- Calthorpe Park Action Day was postponed.
- Remembrance Sunday Parade has been cancelled.
- Circus Wonderland has been postponed until next year.
- Fleet Half Marathon 2021 has been cancelled.
- Calthorpe Park playground and the surrounding areas.

**FC November 2020 ITEM 14**

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next virtual meeting of the Council is scheduled for Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 at 19.00.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 21.49.

Signed.....

Date:.....

Chairman

**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 counterproposals 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**

**FC November 2020 Item 15**

**CONTRACTUAL MATTER**

Members received confidential papers and considered the detail of a contractual matter.

**RESOLVED**

To respond to the contractual matter as discussed.

**DRAFT**