



## **FLEET TOWN COUNCIL**

### **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING**

held on

Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2022 at 7pm

#### **PRESENT**

**Councillors:** R. Schofield (Chairman), G. Chenery, P. Einchcomb, R. Fang, L. Holt, A. Hope, E. May, A. Oliver, R. Richmond, R. Robinson S. Tilley, B. Willcocks and G. Woods.

#### **Also Present:**

Rochelle Halliday – Executive Officer  
Councillor Mark Butcher – HDC  
Councillor Steve Forster – HCC  
Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC  
Councillor Gareth Saunders – Church Crookham Parish Council  
Councillor Annette Whibley – Church Crookham Parish Council  
Michael Rhodes  
Sergeant Mayne and PCSO Page – Hampshire Police  
1 members of the public

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 1            APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Members received and accepted apologies from Cllr Cottrell and Cllr Engström due to illness and Cllr Krishnamurthy due to caring responsibilities.

Cllr Wildsmith was absent.

Cllr Schofield requested moving items 8 and 9 to be considered after item 6, which was agreed.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 2            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Einchcomb declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 9, Fleet Link Bus Service Changes, as he is a voluntary driver for Fleet Link.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 3            QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from the public.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 4            CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Schofield reported his attendance during the period as follows:

Cllr Schofield attended four civic events since the last meeting:

- Representing the Council at HDC's chairman's service of dedication at Hook on 6<sup>th</sup> November.
- The RBL's service of Remembrance and Parade on 13<sup>th</sup> November with another amazing turnout. Thanks should be recorded to the Fleet and Church Crookham Branch of the RBL for organising the event and to our Officers and Members who assisted in making this another memorable occasion.

- The Fleet Christmas Festival, which was another great success with a huge turnout. Again, special thanks should be recorded to all our Officers who helped in many ways to make the evening a success and a very special thanks to Councillor Tilley for her amazing efforts to bring this event together.
- The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police carol concert at Aldershot.

The Executive Officer and Cllr Schofield met with the Chairman and Clerk of Church Crookham Parish Council on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December to discuss the proposed changes to the Fleet Link fare structure and fares.

Members were asked to confirm their availability to attend the Vision Meeting, if they have not already done so.

Cllr Schofield then welcomed the police officers present and explained that this was an opportunity to ask questions. Sergeant Mayne provided an update on police resourcing, highlighting extended patrols during the World Cup and the Christmas period support across Hart. Currently, there are five Police Officers and 2 PCSO's for Hart but they also provide Officers for grade 1 calls in the wider area.

Members asked questions regarding how to encourage reporting of serious matters that are posted on social media and if there is any extra support for retailers in the town experiencing theft of goods and anti-social behaviour. The use of CCTV in providing evidence was also discussed.

Condolences were given for the loss of a police officer in late November, who was part of the Hart North team.

The Police Officers left the meeting at 7.23pm.

## **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 5          HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Cllr Parker gave an update on general matters of interest.

### **HCC Reorganisation**

The senior management team at HCC was being streamlined to ensure greater efficiency. The changes come into effect in December 2022.

### **Funding**

The Leader of HCC has written to the Government regarding funding shortfalls.

### **Winter Support**

Winter Support is in place, funded by the Department of Work and Pensions. More information can be found at Connect 4 Communities online

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/socialcareandhealth/childrenandfamilies/connectforcommunities>

### **Rewilding**

Some rural grass verges across Hampshire are being rewilded. This is in focused areas but any suggestions for suitable locations can be put forward.

### **Mineral and Waste Plan**

A consultation in relation to planning rules is currently running.

### **Trees**

A mini-forest scheme is being developed for small pockets of land to improve biodiversity.

Cllr Forster reported as follows.

### **Education, Schools and Libraries**

Under the HCC restructure, the Education, Schools and Libraries Service is a new portfolio responsibility for Cllr Forster.

### **Roads**

Sandy Lane is due to be resurfaced as part of Operation Resilience and other areas are due to be surfaced-dressed in the Fleet area.

### **Youths at Fleet Festivities**

Cllr Butcher reported that the police were now dealing with the reports of groups of youths gathering by KFC at Fleet Christmas Festival and the delayed response by the Police.

### **20mph zones**

An influx of requests has been received to consider removing 20mph zones.

### **Facilities for Young People**

A Community Interest Company has been formed and is working with secondary schools and local partners. Funding requests will be required to develop the provision. Input and ideas on service provision are welcome.

Cllr Butcher left the meeting at 7.45pm.

## **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 6**

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

### **RESOLVED**

The minutes of the Council held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022 were approved and signed as a true record by the Chairman.

The Council received and noted the minutes of the following Committees:

Development Control	14 <sup>th</sup> November and 28 <sup>th</sup> November 2022
Establishment	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2022

It was agreed that Item 9 would be taken next.

## **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 9**

## **FLEET LINK BUS SERVICE CHANGES**

Members discussed:

- a) The Council's response to changes to the Fleet Link bus fares.
- b) Approval of expenditure from the Fleet Link Vehicle Replacement Fund for replacing the Fleet Link bus.
- c) Considered options for the surplus funds from the community transport contract, as a result of changes to the fare structure.

Cllr Saunders (Church Crookham Parish Council) confirmed that Church Crookham Parish Council is concerned about the pace of the fare rises and that the implementation of a standardised fare structure for community transport across the Council is unsuitable for the Fleet Link service.

### **RESOLVED**

- a) To write jointly with Church Crookham Parish Council to convey the following points:
  - The partner Councils are concerned at the pace of change in passenger fares, which will impact the most vulnerable in our community.

- The scale of the changes, leading up to April 2024, amounts to an 87% increase, further exacerbated by the removal of the concessionary bus pass on the service.
  - The attempt to standardise the fare structure across the county does not take into the account how the Fleet Link service is used in our area, namely that the majority of trips are only around a mile long.
  - Current usage is buoyant, and the Councils are concerned that the scale of the fare increases may impact demand and, therefore, the future viability of the service.
  - Whilst the Councils accept that the service is operating in a difficult financial climate, as co-funders of the scheme, there has been insufficient engagement with us regarding the determination of the new fares and fare structure.
- b) To approve expenditure of up to £42,000 to be spent from the Fleet Link Vehicle Replacement Fund for Rushmoor Voluntary Service to purchase a replacement vehicle subject to the following questions:
- Is leasing a bus an alternative that has been considered, rather than purchase?
  - Does the old bus have a re-sale value that can be offset against the replacement cost?
  - What will the re-sale cost be after two years when the contract ends/is renewed in 2025?
- c) Agreed to receive as a reimbursement the share of the surplus funds arising from the Fleet Link contract.

It was agreed that Item 8 would be taken next.

## **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 8                      COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION TO FILL A CASUAL VACANCY**

Further to the Casual Vacancy for Fleet 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 applicant:

- Mr Michael Rhodes

The candidate completed a two-minute presentation to elaborate on their co-option application submission to the Council, with questions from members to follow.

The candidate was thanked for their presentation. Members questioned the candidate on a number of points made in the application and arising from the presentation, to verify accuracy.

Members of the public and all external guests at the meeting were asked to leave the meeting at 8.40pm, to allow the Council to debate the application and vote.

### **RESOLVED**

Members resolved that Mr Rhodes application and subsequent presentation did not demonstrate that he meets the Council's Co-option policy in relation to:

- A record of commitment to Fleet Town area including support for the local community by voluntary or charitable actions;
- Particular skills that would benefit the Council in the discharge of its public duty.

Mr Rhodes, all members of the public and guests returned to the meeting at 8.52pm.

Mr Rhodes was informed of the decision and advised that with increased community involvement and development of beneficial skills, the Council would be happy to consider an application in the future.

Mr Rhodes left the meeting at 8.55pm.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 7            FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Members noted receipt of:

- a. The bank reconciliation for October 2022
- b. The list of payments for October 2022

Cllr Robinson confirmed inspection of the October 2022 bank reconciliations which were in order, and that he has signed the bank statements and payment schedules.

#### **RESOLVED**

- To accept the bank reconciliation for October 2022
- To accept the list of payments for October 2022
- To confirm that the bank reconciliations for October 2022 equal zero and that the bank statements match the reconciliations.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 10            COUNCIL MEETING DATES**

Members discussed the proposed meeting dates.

#### **RESOLVED**

- a) To change of the next Establishment Committee meeting from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2023 to 8<sup>th</sup> February 2023.
- b) To agree the attached Council meeting dates for 2023/24 subject to further discussion regarding the May Annual Meeting of the Council dates for 2023 and 2024.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 11            HART DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2023-2027**

Members considered convening a working group meeting to draft and to submit a response for the HDC Corporate Plan consultation on behalf of the Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

- To form a working group comprising of Cllrs May, Holt, Schofield, Tilley and Woods.
- To devise and submit a response to the Hart District Council Corporate Plan 2302 – 2027 consultation.

#### **FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 12            BUDGET AND PRECEPT FOR 2023/24**

Members received an update from the Executive Officer on the draft budget for next financial year. A Budget Working Group meeting for all Members is currently being arranged and is likely to be 21<sup>st</sup> December 2022 at 5.30pm (to be confirmed shortly). Members to submit comments and questions to the Executive Officer if they are unable to attend.

Cllr Fang informed Members that he has been speaking with residents regarding the Council's budget and The Harlington. Members asked Cllr Fang to share the questions and comments received with the Council.

**FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 13 COMPLAINTS**

Members noted one complaint via the HDC Monitoring Officer, which at the time of the meeting had been finalised with no further action required.

**FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 14 EXECUTIVE OFFICER’S REPORT**

Members received and noted the Executive Officer’s report.

**FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 15 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting of the Council is on Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at 7pm in The Function Room of The Harlington.

**FC DECEMBER 2022 ITEM 16 FLORAL HANGING BASKETS AND DISPLAYS CONTRACT**

The Chairman stated the reasons that this matter needed to be confidential.

**RESOLVED**

That subject to 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.

Cllr Schofield wished everyone a Happy Christmas and the public left the meeting.

The remainder of the meeting was conducted in confidential session.

The meeting closed at 9.50pm.

**Signed.....**

**Date:.....**

**Chairman**