



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 4th December 2024 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

* Councillor Chenery	0 Councillor Richmond
* Councillor Fang	0 Councillor Robinson
* Councillor Holt	* Councillor Stanton
0 Councillor Hope	* Councillor Taylor
0 Councillor James	0 Councillor Tilley
L Councillor May	0 Councillor Wildsmith
* Councillor Neves	* Councillor Willcocks
* Councillor Oliver	* Councillor Woods

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer
Councillor Steve Forster – HCC
Councillor Adrian Collett – HCC
Mike Bye – Chair of Friends of Oakley Park

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Schofield reported his attendance during the period as follows:

- Remembrance Parade – incredible turn out for both Sunday and Monday services.
- Christmas Festival – a great event that was extremely well attended. Almost all the lights worked. There were minimal disturbances which may be attributed to Police presence during the event. Thanks go to Cllr's Tilley and Stanton for organising the event for the residents of Fleet.
- Hart District Council – meeting with the S151 Officer to discuss a number of matters but particularly a staff pension issue and the Heat Source Pump project.

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Adrian Collett (HCC)

- Ancells Farm Sinkhole
 - The sinkhole is getting worse.
 - The path affected by the sinkhole is a Hampshire Highways adopted footpath.
 - The path was inspected by Highways on 3 December 2024 and another two areas of subsidence have been identified.
 - Repairs to the path will be scheduled in January 2025.
 - HCC intend to serve notice on Thames Water to repair their sewer/ foul water lines or HCC will repair and recover their costs from Thames Water.
 - Cllr Collett has also contacted Thames Water directly to add support to FTC's complaint regarding lack of progress on resolving the sinkhole issue.
- Ancell Farm School Bus Service
 - The Education and Children Services Heads of Services have been written to asking that spare seats be sold at cost to parents, and that the interim arrangements continue in place until a workable solution is found.
 - They have also asked if bus services to the two affected schools be shared, acknowledging they have different start and finish times, as it may be more economical.
 - Currently waiting on Officer responses to the above.

Cllr May sought clarification on where the additional subsidence was located. Cllr Collett confirmed it was along the same path as the existing sinkhole.

Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- Christmas Festivities
 - An amazing event
 - There have been incidences of egging, but Police are aware. Their focus is currently on investigating who set seven cars on fire in Hook.
- Road Works
 - There continues to be a lot of road works in the area. Mostly to do with replacing gas pipelines which means other scheduled works are being postponed.
 - Crookham Road is scheduled for resurfacing, surface dressing and fixing of defects.
- Banners – issue regarding banners on Enerveo lampposts has been escalated to the Chief Executive.
- Ancell Farm School Bus Service
 - The option of combining school buses has been rejected as neither school wants the responsibility of looking after children from the other school.
 - Also, there are no large buses available which means selling unused seats is not currently an option.
 - Council intends to review the safety of the walking route which was last formally reviewed in 2017.

Both County Councillors left the meeting after giving their update.

The following report was received from Hart District Council.

Cllr Oliver (HDC)

- HDC will start their food waste collection service from October 2025. They have committed funds to purchase vehicles for this service.
- Hampshire County Council need to upgrade their waste processing centre to enable HDC to expand any further recycling option which is unlikely to occur before 2029.
- HDC completed their first compulsory house purchase on an abandoned property. The property will be auctioned off, and after recovering costs, any excess can be claimed by the landowner.
- HDC are seeking legal advice on legislation allowing Councils to compulsory purchase and auction off empty retail units.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 6th November 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 11th November 2024
- Establishment 13th November 2024

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 7

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members noted receipt of the bank reconciliation and a list of payments for October 2024.

Due to the absence of Councillor Robinson, they were unable to receive a statement confirming that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for October 2024 have been verified and signed off against the original bank statement.

RESOLVED

To receive and accept the bank reconciliation and list of payments for October 2024.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 8

**CONSULTATION ON REMOTE
ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government are holding a consultation on introducing powers for local authority members to apply to the relevant authority for a dispensation to attend formal council meetings remotely and vote by proxy in certain circumstances. If any changes to legislation are made because of this consultation they would apply to local authorities in England only.

RESOLVED

Members determined they wished to complete the consultation as a body corporate stating they did not support hybrid meetings or proxy voting.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 9

VE DAY

The 80th anniversary of VE Day, which marks the end of World War II in Europe, will be commemorated on Thursday, May 8, 2025.

On Thursday 8th May 2025 Town Councils are being encouraged to light Beacons and Lamp Lights of Peace at 9.30pm, and raise a unique VE Day flag at 9am and, where possible, hold parties of celebration throughout the day.

Members noted that the Council already had a beacon from a previous occasion which could be used. They also indicated their preference for a joint event with Hart District Council and the Royal British Legion.

The Lions Club of Fleet sought permission to install two WW2 commemorative benches adjacent to the War Memorial in Gurkha Square. These benches would be purchased by the Lion's Club and unveiled on the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

RESOLVED

- a) Members determined they wished to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day by combining with the Royal British Legion to hold a service at the War Memorial where a flag would be raised and a beacon lit.
- b) Members approved the fixing of two benches adjacent to the War Memorial in Gurkha Square and indicated they wanted one each of the two styles of benches proposed.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 10

CYBER ESSENTIALS

Members received a report on what Cyber Essentials is and how it impacts Fleet Town Council.

RESOLVED

Members considered the report and determined that they wished to complete a one-off IT audit through Cyber Essentials accreditation. Members further decided that having a third party complete the accreditation would provide the best level of assurance and therefore approved the Executive Officer to appoint a supplier to complete Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation at a cost of approximately £2,000.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 11

DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

Members considered the report from the Executive Officer on the draft budget for 2025/26.

Cllr Willcocks proposed that the precept be increased by £35,000 to fund a school bus for Ancell Farm residents. The motion was seconded by Cllr May. The motion was not carried with the following results:

- 4 For
- 7 Against
- 1 Abstention

Members were then requested to approve the revised estimates for 2024/25, the draft budget for 2025/26 and agree the precept for the financial year 2025/26. Additionally, Members were requested to note the budget forecast projections for periods 2026/27 and 2027/28 which are based on Officers' understanding of the Council's potential future activities.

RESOLVED

- a) Members resolved to approve the revised estimates for the financial year 2024/25.
- b) Members resolved to approve the budget for the financial year 2025/26.
- c) Members resolved to agree a precept requirement for the financial year 2025/26 of £1,435,992.
- d) Members noted budget forecast projections for period 2025/26 & 2026/27.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 12

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members received and noted the following announcements:

- Executive Officer updated Members on various online meetings attended and their impact on Fleet Town Council.
- Chairman invited Members to attend an upcoming on-line pre-contract meeting with our proposed Design Architects.
- Chairman advised Members that the wording of the Harlington lease had been agreed subject to work being finalised on the demise plan.
- Chairman invited Members to stay after the meeting for Christmas drinks and nibbles.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 13

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 8th January 2025 at 7pm in The Harlington.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – CLOSED SESSION

The Chairman stated that the following items for discussion relate to the engagement and terms of service in relation to employees and terms of tenders, and proposals and counterproposals in negotiations for contracts.

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.

FC DECEMBER 2024 ITEM 14

HARLINGTON COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Members received a draft communication strategy for The Harlington from the Communications Officer.

RESOLVED

Members approved the draft communication strategy for The Harlington.

The meeting closed at 9.11pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date:.....