



## FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

### MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 7pm

\* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

\* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

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

\* 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  
David Millen - 22nd Odiham Fleet Scouts

#### FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 1                      APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

#### FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 2                      DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Tilley and Stanton declared another registerable interests in Agenda Items 9 & 11 on the grounds that they are organisers of the events.

#### FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 3                      QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

#### FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 4                      CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Simple report this month, time spent primarily on helping finalise the Ground Maintenance Contract, preparing for the ARM and meeting Thames Water on site at Ancells Farm to inspect the sink hole.

Original meeting was scheduled for 25<sup>th</sup> February, but Thames had rescheduled for 26<sup>th</sup>. Thames arrived mob handed two bowser lorries, two service vans and the CCTV camera unit. No tanker lorry to pump down the sewer as previously agreed.

Attempted flushing the sewer but to no avail, the CCTV camera submerged and no imaging was possible.

In desperation the Area Engineer poured a significant quantity of tracer dye into the sinkhole and put the camera into the next downstream manhole, the sewage effluent turned green indicating a direct connection between the sinkhole and the sewer.

Thames said they had instigated a 72-hour notice which meant they should return to site, and it was their intention to plug the sewer and pump over the questionable area so a camera could be inserted into a dry sewer.

Subsequently advised a Thames representative had been on site on the 27th without notice. This week Thames civil engineering contractor Cappagh appeared on site and started excavating the sink hole, without notice!

It is their intention to excavate in two stages down to the sewer (5-6m) and physically repair the sewer. The problem is the extent of the excavation will undermine a TPOd oak tree.

Cappagh excavated adjacent to the footpath down to a depth of 1 m, secured the site and left until Hart's tree Officer could inspect the tree. This is arranged for 10 am Thursday 6 March 2025.

A point of interest is Thame's asset plan does not record the pumped sewer connection entering the manhole adjacent to the sinkhole. Thames interpretation is that this is a private sewer serving the area of the Community Centre, shops and flats. This may be cause for concern.

## **FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 5**

## **HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

### Cllr Adrian Collett (HCC)

- Ancells Farm Sinkhole –Highways were due to come Monday but have put works on hold whilst TW complete their works.
- Ansell Road / Cove Road junction – have received reports that junction is slippery. A SCRIM test has been requested but it is likely the road will be resurfaced as it is a quicker solution.
- Cove Road Speed Limit – consultation to reduce the 50 miles per hour speed limit to 40 miles per hour on Cove Road, Fleet between its roundabout junction with A3013 Minley Road and a point 59 meters west of its roundabout junction with B3014 Fleet Road. Consultation closes 21 March 2025.
- Centaur House and One Fleet, Ancells Road – Revised plans propose the creation of multiple smaller commercial units instead of the previously intended residential conversion. The developers have requested FTC's assistance in organising public consultation meetings.
- Ansell Farm School Bus Service – A temporary solution for the current school year has been brokered but a local solution is still required from September 2025 onwards. County Officers have offered their help in identifying possible solutions.

Cllr Woods asked if the speed limit review was impacted by the new care home. Cllr Collett responded that it had more to do with the crossing at the other end of the road.

Cllr Collett left the meeting at the end of his report.

#### Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- Road Works
  - Kings Road / Fleet Road Light Sequencing – an engineer has been out to reprogramme the light sequence which should resolve the issue. The issue of cars jumping red lights at this junction has been reported to the Police with a request that they monitor.
  - Church Road – pothole repairs completed.
  - Hitches Lane – work on the crossing scheduled proceeding quickly. Other planned works likely to be delayed due to delays in completing legal agreements.
  - Elvetham Heath roundabouts – extensive works planned for half term to minimise disruptions. TW works have been re-engineered to reduce impact on roads. However, this will mean the felling of trees.
  - Leawood Road – works done to a poor standard which has been raised with contractor. Due to other works planned on the road, will address at a later stage.
- Secondary School Placements – 97% of applications got their first choice – this is one of the highest rates in the country. There is an appeals process for anyone not happy with their placement.
- Fleet Road – there is a blitz on delivery drivers parking illegally on Fleet Road.
- Devolution – Initial proposals are due to the government on 21 March 2025. Several meetings are scheduled. All councils involved in the process are engaging constructively at this stage. HCC has asked for more information from Government on the role of Town & Parish Councils in the process.

#### Cllr Alan Oliver (HDC)

- Confirmed that Hampshire councils are working together. HDC have not made any decisions in Cabinet.
- The HDC CEO is taking semi-retirement after 40 years of public service. He will be working 3 days a week and will focus on the local government reorganisation.
- A balanced budget has been approved for HDC which includes a 5% uplift. There are financial challenges ahead.
- HDC are proceeding in updating the Local Plan, which can be transferred to the new authority. This new plan will take 30 months to complete and will impact Neighbourhood Plans. Town & Parish Councils will be consulted with as HDC need to find sites for 11,000 homes.

Cllr Forster added that the CEO of Rushmoor District Council is also leaving and there will be an interim CEO until the new authority is in place. He also said that the current proposed merger of Rushmoor, Basingstoke & Deane and Hart fell short of the Governments required 500,000 population and that is likely to cause issues as the Government is not concerned about 'place' (meaning at least one district council in Hampshire may need to be segmented to achieve population requirements).

## **FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 6**

## **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

Councillor Chenery requested an amendment to the minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2025 to reflect he was in attendance. With that amendment agreed, the minutes were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 10<sup>th</sup> February 2025
- Policy and Finance 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025

### **FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 7 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT**

Members noted receipt of the bank reconciliation and a list of payments for January 2025.

Councillor Stanton confirmed that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for January 2025 have been verified and signed off against the original bank statement.

#### **RESOLVED**

- 1) To receive and accept the bank reconciliation and list of payments for January 2025.
- 2) To accept the statement from Councillor Stanton that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for January 2025 have been verified and signed off.

### **FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 8 FIXED ASSET DISPOSALS**

Financial Regulation 14.2 requires that the disposal of any asset over £250 be approved by Full Council.

Fleet Town Council recently upgraded all staff computer equipment, rendering the old devices obsolete. Members requested that the computer equipment be offered to Fleet Lions who wipe the equipment and donate to people in need.

#### **RESOLVED**

Members approved the disposal of the obsolete computer equipment.

### **FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 9 FLEET VICTORY IN EUROPE 80 YEAR CELEBRATION EVENT**

David Millen, 22nd Odiham Fleet Scouts, addressed the meeting regarding this item.

In 1945, the nation celebrated Victory in Europe with street parties, dancing, and community gatherings. To commemorate this historic occasion, a family-friendly community event is proposed to take place in Gurkha Square on Thursday, 8th May 2025.

The organisers will be seeking contributions from Fleet Lions and Fleet BID towards the estimated £1,000 cost. However, should full funding not be secured, they have requested that the Council consider underwriting the event. Additionally, they are seeking approval for the event to be covered under the Council's insurance policy.

#### **RESOLVED**

Members expressed their support for the organisation and delivery of the VE80 Celebration Event and resolved to underwrite the event and provide insurance cover. In the event that the Council is required to fulfil its underwriting commitment, the necessary funds will be allocated from the 2025/26 Community Support Grants budget.

**FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 10****BASINGSTOKE CANAL**

Cllrs Woods, Einchcomb, and Schofield, along with the Executive Officer, attended the inaugural Basingstoke Canal Annual Meeting on 19 February 2025.

Fleet Town Council currently contributes £18,309 per annum toward the upkeep of the Basingstoke Canal, though this funding is provided without a formal agreement. At the meeting, Basingstoke Canal Strategic Manager James Taylor outlined plans to introduce Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with riparian partners. These agreements would define the roles, responsibilities, and financial commitments of each partner within the partnership.

Members acknowledged the value of the Basingstoke Canal as an important community amenity.

**RESOLVED**

Members resolved not to enter into a formal Service Level Agreement, thereby maintaining flexibility in determining the level of financial support provided. It was further resolved to keep the financial contribution under review and to reassess the Council's contribution as part of the 2026/27 budget-setting process.

**FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 11****CPR TRAINING**

Recent media coverage has strongly encouraged the public to undertake CPR training. Given ongoing discussions about defibrillators in the area, including those on the high street, it was proposed that FTC, in collaboration with St John Ambulance (SJA), facilitate CPR training sessions at The Harlington. This initiative aligns with FTC's commitment to public health, demonstrated through its involvement in the Covid vaccination programme, and would further establish The Harlington as a key community hub.

David Millen advised that the training would cost approximately £20 per hour for the instructor for groups of 12–20 participants. A schedule of one-hour sessions is required, with the Executive Officer tasked with identifying suitable time slots based on the availability of the Function Room. It was suggested that participants be charged £5 to encourage attendance and that sessions be cancelled if fewer than five people sign up. Promotion of the training was proposed through council social media channels and local GP surgeries.

**RESOLVED**

Members agreed in principle to the proposal but requested a more detailed plan be brought back to the committee for further consideration.

David Millen left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

**FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 12****HARLINGTON UPDATE**

Members received an update from the Chairman on the following matters relating to The Harlington.

### **Harlington Lease**

The lease has been signed by Fleet Town Council and sealed by Hart District Council. While two minor issues with registration have been identified, agreed solutions are in place to resolve them.

Upon attempting to use the allocated parking spaces included in the lease, Officers discovered that amendments to the Off-Street Parking Order are required. The Chairman, General Manager, and Executive Officer are scheduled to meet with Hart District Council officers next week to address this matter.

There has been no progress on the Hampshire County Council (HCC) / Hart District Council (HDC) / Fleet Town Council (FTC) sublease.

### **Business Plan**

As previously reported, the principal consultant engaged to develop the business plan for The Harlington passed away unexpectedly. Her business partner has requested a hiatus to assess which elements of the contract, if any, can still be fulfilled. In the meantime, alternative options for assistance in developing the business plan are being explored.

### **Land Swap**

The mapping issues affecting the lease registration also impact the land swap. Additionally, two small areas of land (referred to as 'the sausages') need to be transferred from Hart District Council to Fleet Town Council to resolve further mapping discrepancies.

### **Architects**

The draft contract has been issued to the appointed architects. Efforts are currently underway to schedule a preliminary meeting to initiate the project.

### **RESOLVED**

To ensure the project progresses without unnecessary delays, Members agreed to the following delegated authorities:

- Full Council approval is required to determine the final design option for the project.
- All other project-related matters are delegated to the Harlington Working Group.
- The Harlington Working Group may establish an Executive Group, consisting of the Executive Officer and three members of the Harlington Working Group. These members must be available at short notice and during normal business hours to address urgent matters.
- Any decisions made by the Executive Group must be reported to the Harlington Working Group at its next scheduled meeting.
- The Harlington Working Group will schedule monthly meetings to oversee the project.

### **FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 13**

### **ANNUAL RESIDENTS' MEETING**

Members noted that MP Alex Brewer was unable to attend the Annual Residents Meeting due to parliamentary commitments. Members further noted the agenda for the Annual Residents' Meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

**FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 14**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Members received and noted the following announcements:

- The Environment Agency held an engagement event at Calthorpe Park last Friday where they offered free surveys for residents located in documented flood areas.
- 3 March 2025 several Councillors received a presentation on a Digital Town Hub app. Members generally positive about presentation and would like the Council to investigate this further.
  - The Council’s representatives on the BID would explore the BID’s interest.
- Scouts group planted 22 tree whips over the weekend in two locations at Ancells Farm. Ten of the 22 trees were later uprooted, with some replanted in different locations by an unknown person(s).
- Cllr Richmond attended an event recently at Fleet Town Football Club where there was a lot of positivity about the Town Council.
- Fleet Town Council’s new website is scheduled to go live on Thursday 6 March 2025.
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**FC MARCH 2025 ITEM 15**

**DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2025 at 7pm in The Harlington.

The meeting closed at 9:23pm.

**Signed**.....  
**Chairman**

**Date**.....