



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 2nd October 2024 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

Councillor Chenery
0 Councillor Fang
* Councillor Holt
Councillor Hope
* Councillor James
* Councillor May
* Councillor Neves

* Councillor Oliver
* Councillor Richmond
* Councillor Robinson
* Councillor Taylor
* Councillor Tilley
L Councillor Wildsmith
Councillor Willcocks
* Councillor Woods

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

Also in attendance:

Rita Tong – Executive Officer
Alex Robins – Harlington General Manager
Councillor Steve Forster – HCC
Councillor Adrian Collett – HCC
Mike Bye – Chair of Friends of Oakley Park

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Tilley declared a registerable interest in Agenda Items 7 and 16 on the grounds that she is an organiser of the events.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Schofield reported his attendance during the period as follows:

5th September represented FTC at the RAF Odiham annual reception.

10th September, together with the Executive Officer met with Liz Vango Smith and Graham Clerk of Hart District Council regarding the government grant for an Air Source Heat pump. In particular, discussed timing in relation to the potential refurbishment work to the

Harlington. The grant money must be used within two financial years, so completion by April 2026. Agreed signing of a lease on the Harlington was critical to overall planning.

18th September together with the Executive Officer met the Chief Executive and Property Services Manager regarding outstanding matters on the Harlington Lease notified to Hart in FTC letter dated 9th September. It was a very fruitful meeting in as much as there was general agreement to the suggested amendments to the lease and HDC would instruct B&DLS accordingly. It was hoped that a final draft lease could be available for the October Full Council Meeting but regrettably, to date, there has been no feedback.

18th September attended Teams Meeting with HCC Transport Team regarding the potential outcome of the consultation on Community Transport. There is hope that due to proven financial savings to the Educational Bus Scheme by the Community Minibus Hire Scheme the Community Bus service will be saved. The new information will be presented to the Decision Day meeting.

Various Dates – together with the Executive Officer we responded to the 104 questions in the NPPF Consultation.

23rd September attended the Fleet BID Board Meeting.

30th September met with Caroline Winchurch HVA to discuss collaboration between FTC and HVA over the heat loss surveys of residential properties. HVA have been awarded a contract by HDC to manage the surveys across the whole of Hart, but the Fleet Town area is already being covered by the Warmer Homes pillar of the Greening Campaign, coordination of the work is essential.

30th September together with the Facilities and Open Spaces Manager met members of Fleet Town Football Club to review some continuing matters over the new lease agreement. The main purpose of the meeting was to walk the boundary and determine the exact extent of the leased land.

30th September together with the Facilities and Open Spaces Manager carried out a very preliminary survey of a potential further extension to the cemetery. This has come about as a consequence of the discussions with HDC over the transfer of the cemetery land which has not been registered due to the loss of the original deeds. The review of the land transfers revealed that several areas of land (excluding the main cemetery area) have been registered with the Land Registry and are therefore fully under our control. Further details will be brought to the next RLA Committee.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 5

HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- The Hartland Village planning application for the infant school is expected to be submitted imminently. The assessment of primary school requirements has concluded that, due to a declining birth rate and a surplus of primary school places both nationally and locally, two classroom intakes will be sufficient. The Council is continuing to review secondary school requirements, with initial indications suggesting that there are adequate places available locally, particularly when priority is given to local catchment areas. It was noted that a number of secondary school places are currently occupied by children from outside Hampshire.
- A public survey on the proposed pedestrian and cycle improvements along Hitches Lane is open until 10 November 2024 (as per the Council's website). The proposal

includes widening the footpath to 3 metres and shifting the road alignment, which will necessitate some tree removal.

- There are currently over 200 active gas works across the area. Elvetham Road remains closed due to complications in laying new gas pipes, with the closure now extended to 4 November 2024.
- The resurfacing works on Fleet Road have been scheduled as night works to minimize disruption to residents.
- The installation of the new pedestrian crossing near Calthorpe Park School has been delayed due to the ongoing consultation process. Originally planned for the October half-term, the crossing is now expected to be installed in January 2025.
- The Council is reviewing options to reduce accidents at several key junctions along Upper Street.
- HCC Officers have submitted a number of recommendations for the Savings 2025 initiative. These will be presented to the Executive for consideration on Decision Day, scheduled for 14 October 2024.

Cllr May asked how having out of county students impacted a schools funding. Cllr Forster clarified that funding is based on the number of students attending the school and that their home address was irrelevant.

Cllr Adrian Collett (HCC)

- Gave an update on the issue of school buses for Ancell Farm residents.
 - In the short term, additional transport is being provided to accommodate children not eligible for free places, allowing parents to pay for available spaces. This arrangement will remain in place until the end of the current school term.
 - The recent late notice of a service cancellation due to the unavailability of an escort has been investigated. It was determined that an escort was not required, and the service was reinstated in time for the afternoon buses to operate as scheduled. A broader review of escort requirements is now underway.
 - Cllr Collett is gathering information on bus service provision, with Ancells Farm identified as a unique case. Work is ongoing to develop a solution for the next school term and beyond.

The following report was received from Hart District Council.

Cllr Oliver (HDC)

- HDC views on the NPPF consultation are on the Council's website.
- Clarified that there would be 64 trees removed in the proposed cycle way route between Hitches Lane and Fleet Road but there is a plan for planting to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.
- The second phase proposes a safe route between Church Crookham and Calthorpe Park school. These are the County Council proposals.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 4th September 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 27th August 2024, 9th and 23rd September 2024

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 7

CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL INSURANCE

The annual Fleet Christmas Festival will take place in Fleet Road and will be open to the public between 2 pm & 9 pm on Wednesday, 27th November 2024. To accommodate the activities and entertainment, Fleet Road will be closed between Kings Road and the Oatsheaf traffic lights from 10 am – 10.30 pm on that day. The road closure will enable the activities and entertainment to set up and pack down safely. The event will be open to the public from 2 pm – 9 pm.

Fleet Town Council was asked to cover the road closure activity under the Council's public liability insurance in 2023 (refer minutes from Nov 23 Item 9) and the event organisers have asked if the Council could do so again this year.

The Executive Officer has confirmed with the Council's insurers that this is acceptable and will not result in any change to the premium already paid.

RESOLVED

Members approved the provision of insurance coverage for the Christmas Festival on 27th November 2024, provided the following documentation was submitted to the Executive Officer:

- Event plan
- Risk Assessment for each area of the event.
- A copy of the Safety Advisory Group approval for the event.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 8

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

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

RESOLVED

- a) To receive and accept the bank reconciliation and list of payments for August 2024.
- b) To accept the statement from Councillor Robinson that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for June, July and August 2024 have been verified and signed off.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 9

FINANCE AND RISK REGISTER 2024/25

- a) To receive an update from the Risk Management Working Group
- b) To consider and agree the Council's Finance and Risk Register for 2024/25

RESOLVED

- a) To note the update from the Risk Management Working Group.
- b) To approve the Finance and Risk Register for 2024/25.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 10**REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Internal Auditor recommended that Fleet Town Council adapt and adopt the latest model Financial Regulations from NALC. The Executive Officer compared the Council's current Financial Regulation's against the model, noted differences and made recommendations regarding how to treat the differences identified. These recommendations were then incorporated into an updated Financial Regulations document.

RECOMMENDATION

Members reviewed the proposed Financial Regulations, and barring the correction of identified grammatical errors approved the amended Financial Regulations

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 11**RETENTION & DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTS POLICY**

The Finance and Administration Manager, along with the Administration Support Officer, drafted a Retention & Disposal of Documents Policy. In developing this policy, they carefully considered the Internal Auditor's recommendation for the Council to adopt a risk-based approach, while also aligning with best practices in the sector.

RECOMMENDATION

Members approved the Retention & Disposal of Documents Policy.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 12**TREASURY & INVESTMENT POLICY**

The Executive Officer has drafted a Treasury & Investment Policy. In developing this policy, she carefully considered the Internal Auditor's best practice example, while also considering the principles outlined in the Statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments and guidance within Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance Practitioners Guide 2024

RESOLVED

Members requested that the draft Treasury & Investment Policy be brought back to this Committee with a proposal on how to include the Council's stance on ethical investment.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 13**PUBLICATION SCHEME**

The Internal Auditor had recommended that the Council adopt the model Information Commissioner's Office scheme. In response, Officers reviewed the model scheme and made appropriate amendments to the Council's policy.

RESOLVED

Members approved the amended Publication Scheme

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 14**DISPOSAL OF PIANO**

Financial Regulation 14.2 requires that the disposal of any asset over £250 be approved by Full Council. Fleet Town Council currently own a piano located in the Music Room which is on the Fixed Asset Register for £1,006. This piano was originally purchased to support music classes run within The Harlington. Those music classes no longer run and there are no known plans for any to start up. Officers requested approval to dispose of the piano which has an estimated market value of £200.

RESOLVED

Members approved the disposal of the piano for the best value Officers can achieve and noted that any monies received would be treated as a capital receipt.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 15

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION TO FILL A CASUAL VACANCY

Members deferred considering the application received for co-option to fill a casual vacancy.

RESOLVED

Due to the unavailability of the candidate to attend the meeting, Members agreed to defer this item until the next Full Council meeting.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 16

EVENT APPLICATION – MUSIC ON THE VIEWS

Members considered the request to hold Music on the Views between 12pm and 10pm on Saturday 30 August 2025. The event would be run in partnership with The Harlington and be run in a similar format as the successful 2024 event.

Members noted that the site plan included with the application was indicative only, as the event did not actually traverse Bakers Way as indicated in the plan.

RESOLVED

Members approved the request to hold the Music Festival on The Views on 30 August 2024.

Full Council Minutes 7th February Item 9 stated that any event surplus would be reserved for future events, therefore Members agreed that the surplus from the 2024 Music on the Views event should be earmarked for the 2025 Music on the Views event.

Members approved that the sum of £2,034 that was allocated to the 2024 event as a contingency but not required, be earmarked for the 2025 Music on the Views event. Further, Members agreed that the Fleet Town Council share on the unspent Coronation event monies (a proportional sum calculated to be £698.88) also be earmarked for the 2025 Music on the Views event.

Cllr Tilley will contact all other sponsors of the Coronation event to determine what they wished to be done with their proportion on the unspent monies.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 17

MEETING SCHEDULE FOR THE COUNCIL

Members considered and agreed the amended Council's meeting schedule for 2024/25 which now includes an Establishment Committee meeting in February 2025 and a Risk Management Working Group meeting in January 2025.

Members considered the draft Council's meeting schedule for 2025/26 and noted that the annual meeting in May 2026 would need to be moved to 13 May as it was an election year. Members were requested to advise the Executive Officer of any issues with the schedule of meetings prior to the Annual Meeting when final approval would be sought.

RESOLVED

Members approved the amended schedule of meetings for the Council for 2024/25.

Members provisionally approved the amended proposed schedule of meetings for the Council for 2025/26.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 18

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members received and noted the following announcements

- Remembrance Parade – Members to let Executive Officer know if they plan to attend the service and parade.
- Remembrance Parade – Members to let Executive Officer know if they are available to help host tea and coffee after the service.
- SW Railways – Executive Officer attended the Stakeholder meeting. SW Railways shared how they use information on delays and cancellations to improve the service. The Labour government intends to nationalise rail services, so SW Railways do not expect their contract to be renewed but do not have any further information at this time.
- Health & Safety – A representative from our service provider Croner attended The Harlington to review our progress against their previous audit.
- South & South-East in Bloom – the Facilities & Open Spaces Manager and Executive Officer attended the award ceremony where Fleet Town Council were awarded 4 Golds, 4 Silver Gilt and 1 Silver award. Most pleasingly, Basingbourne Park retained its Gold despite the unauthorised encampment during the judging period.
- Internal Auditor – a representative from Mulberry Local Authority Services Ltd will be on site on 4 October 2024 for their initial interim audit.
- Safety, Health & Wellbeing Conference – several Officers attended the conference earlier in the day. There was a lot of useful information gathered that will help Officers to improve health and safety record keeping and processes.
- Donation – officers received a generous £1,000 donation toward the Christmas Day lunch. A letter of thanks has been sent to the donor.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 19

SAFE DISPOSAL OF LITHIUM BATTERIES CAMPAIGN

Ron Bailey, the researcher for Lord Don Foster, had requested that Fleet Town Council support the campaign to improve the safety of lithium batteries (used in e-bike and e-scooters) and their disposal. Lithium battery fires are on the increase, in part because they have been incorrectly maintained and / or disposed of.

In support of this request, Fleet Town Council will run a social media campaign on the risks of lithium batteries and where they can be safely disposed of within Fleet. This will be done as a part of a wider campaign on recycling which fits within the Council's Greening Fleet objectives.

FC OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 20

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 6th November 2024 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 OCTOBER 2024 ITEM 21

HARLINGTON LEASE

Members agreed that the update given within open session Agenda Item 4 Chairman's Announcements was sufficient.

The meeting closed at 8:51pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date:.....