



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on
Wednesday 2nd April 2025 at 7pm

* Councillor Schofield (Chairman)

* Councillor Einchcomb (Vice Chairman)

* Councillor Chenery	0 Councillor Robinson
0 Councillor Fang	* Councillor Stanton
* Councillor Holt	* Councillor Taylor
# Councillor Hope	* Councillor Tilley
* Councillor May	0 Councillor Wildsmith
0 Councillor Neves	0 Councillor Willcocks
* Councillor Oliver	0 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 Stephen Parker – HCC
Mike Bye – Chair of Friends of Oakley Park
Mr & Mrs Willis - Residents

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Members received and accepted the apologies as noted above.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Tilley and Stanton declared other registerable interests in Agenda Item 17 on the grounds that they are organisers of the event.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Has been regularly visiting the Ancells Farm sinkhole to monitor progress. Observed that there is recent leakage into the bottom of excavation. Has now been barred from site under Thames Water Authority's Health & Safety reasons.

Has received an email from Adrian Collett advising of his resignation as a County Councillor. Would like to invite Mr Collett to a future meeting to formally thank him for his 45 years of public service.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 5

HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council.

Cllr Stephen Parker (HCC)

- Adrian Collett – His retirement had been planned for some time; however, he would be greatly missed.
- Lead Local Flood Authority – Responsible for identifying sources of flooding and seeking resolutions in collaboration with Thames Water and the Environment Agency.

Cllr Oliver enquired whether this work was connected to the recent Flood Mary project. Cllr Parker confirmed that it was.

Cllr Steve Forster (HCC)

- Road Works
 - Hitches Lane – work on the crossing is largely completed (due to be fully completed by the end of next week). Resurfacing works will then take place. They are scheduled to last a week and take place at night to minimise traffic congestion.
- Hartland Village
 - School - the site for the school has almost finished its preparation phase. Actual building not due to be completed until September 2027.
 - Sales – the rate of sales is significantly slower than planned.
- Adrian Collett – gave exemplary service and leaves a great legacy. There are currently two candidates for his replacement.

Cllrs Parker and Forster left the meeting at the conclusion of this item.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 5 March 2025 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 24th February, 10th and 24th March 2025
- Establishment 12th March 2025
- RLA 19th March 2025

As the Planning Committee meeting of 24 March 2025 was not quorate, Members reviewed the proposed observations and agreed they should be submitted on the Council's behalf.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 7

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

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

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

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 8

REQUEST TO PURCHASE COUNCIL LAND

A resident requested that the Council consider selling a small piece of amenity land at Ancells Farm and addressed Members in support of this request.

Members acknowledged the challenges posed by the exceptionally long waiting lists for the limited allotment sites available to Fleet residents and understood the reasoning behind the request.

However, Members noted the Council's duty to protect and safeguard public land. They expressed concern that granting such a request would set a precedent, making it difficult to refuse similar requests in the future.

RESOLVED

The request to sell Council land was not approved.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 9

LOAN FOR UPDATING PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

The 2025/26 budget includes provision for a £600,000 loan to fund updates to playground equipment at The Views and Edenbrook. Additional earmarked reserves are available for these projects.

To proceed with the loan, the Council must pass a formal resolution at a Full Council meeting, with all Members present. Supporting documentation, including financial details, a business case, and evidence of public consultation, will be required as part of the application.

A public consultation will be conducted once fully costed project proposals have been finalised.

Members requested that the Executive Officer confirm whether all Members have to be present, as historically there are few meetings that reach this standard and the normal rule for any resolution is by simple majority.

RESOLVED

Members agreed to use the Parks & Open Spaces Working Group to put together proposals and establish estimates to select projects within overall financial availability including reserves and loan.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 10**BUILDING REVALUATIONS**

Members noted that a key responsibility of the Council is to ensure that buildings under its management have adequate insurance cover for fire, flood, and other insured perils. The 'sum insured' reflects the worst-case scenario of total devastation and must be accurately assessed to avoid under- or over- insurance.

Importance of Regular Valuations

- The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) recommends a revaluation every three years to ensure accuracy.
- Failure to conduct regular valuations may result in buildings being over-insured (leading to inflated premiums) or under-insured (leading to reduced claim settlements).
- In the event of a claim, insurers will request evidence of a valuation within the last three years. If unavailable, they may conduct their own valuation at the Council's expense.
- Non-compliance with lease agreements can lead to legal disputes, potential refunds of overcharged premiums, and challenges in enforcing service charge payments.

The last insurance revaluations for all buildings other than The Harlington were done by Capita Symonds in December 2010. The Harlington was revalued in November 2023.

RESOLVED

Members agreed to revalue all Council owned or managed buildings for insurance purposes. Members further agreed that this would be funded from the 2024/25 surplus.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 11**NEONATAL CARE LEAVE POLICY**

Members noted that the Employment Rights Bill introduced new statutory rights for Neonatal Care Leave and Pay, coming into effect on 6th April 2025. This legislation grants parents of babies requiring neonatal care within the first 28 days of birth the right to take up to 12 weeks of leave, in addition to existing maternity or paternity leave.

Key Implications for Employers

- Employees will be entitled to paid neonatal care leave from their first day of employment.
- Eligible parents will qualify for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (SNCP).
- No notice requirement will be imposed on employees taking this leave.
- Failure to comply with the new statutory rights could result in tribunal claims.
- Employers must update their HR policies and documentation to ensure compliance.

RESOLVED

- a) Members approved the draft Neonatal Care Leave Policy.
- b) Cllrs Stanton, Holt and Schofield along with the Executive Officer are to review the detailed procedure and bring it back to the next suitable Committee meeting.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 12**COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

Hart District Council is conducting a Community Governance Review of all existing parishes from 17 March to 16 May. The review will assess governance arrangements, including parish structures, electoral arrangements, and naming conventions, to ensure they reflect community identity and are effective.

This statutory review, last conducted in 2012, aims to enhance local democracy and representation. Hart District Council will oversee the process, including consultation and stakeholder engagement, before drafting recommendations for approval.

Members discussed the need for a minimum number of electors per councillor (suggested at 1,000), which could require some smaller councils to merge.

RESOLVED

Members agreed that individual responses to the consultation would be preferable, and that the consultation should be actively promoted to residents via the Council's social media channels to encourage public engagement.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 13**REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Members noted that due to new legislation coming into force in February 2025, a review of Fleet Town Council's Financial Regulations was required to ensure compliance. The Procurement Act 2023 and The Procurement Regulation 2024 have now replaced the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, requiring updates to the Council's financial procedures.

RESOLVED

Members reviewed and approved the proposed amendments to Fleet Town Councils Financial Regulations.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 14**HARLINGTON UPDATE**

Members received an update from the Chairman on the:

- Harlington Lease
- Land Swap
- Business Plan
- HCC/HDC/FTC sub-lease
- Harlington renovation project.

Members noted that The Harlington Working Group would need to convene to determine responses to some of the questions posed by the design architects and requested that the Executive Officer circulate some options for meeting dates and times.

RESOLVED

To note the update from the Chairman.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 15

CONTRACT FINDER

From 24 February 2025, local authority contracts exceeding £30,000 (including VAT) must be published on Find-Tender instead of Contracts Finder when using an open invitation process.

Posting on Contracts Finder after this date will no longer be legally compliant. This change does not apply to contracts where councils directly invite specific firms. Existing contract invitations posted before 24 February remain valid, and Contracts Finder may be retired once these contracts are completed.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 16

COUNCILLOR RESIGNATION

Members were informed of Cllr Declan James resignation as Town Councillor on 4 March 2025.

The vacancy notice was published on 4 March and ran for 14 days (excluding bank holidays). Hart District Council confirmed they did not receive a request to hold an election to fill the vacancy. Consequently, the vacancy can be filled by co-option which is currently being advertised.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 17

VE80 EVENT

Hart District Council has confirmed that Gurkha Square Car Park may be used for the VE80 commemoration event. Cllrs Stanton and Tilley are working alongside David Millen to organise the event.

Fleet Lions would like to unveil their memorial benches as part of this event.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 18

ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

FC APRIL 2025 ITEM 19

DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 7th May 2025 (Annual Town Council) at 7pm in The Harlington.

The meeting closed at 8:35pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date.....