



FLEET TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING

held on

Wednesday 5th June 2024 at 7pm

PRESENT

Councillors: R. Schofield (Chairman), G. Chenery, K. Cottrell, P. Einchcomb, R. Fang, L. Holt, A. Hope, A. Oliver, R. Richmond, R. Robinson, D. Taylor, S. Tilley, B. Willcocks and G. Woods

In Attendance: Rochelle Halliday – Executive Officer
Sarah Moore – Finance and Administration Manager
Louise Rogers – Administration Support Officer
Councillor Stephen Parker – HCC
2 representatives from Fleet Lions Community Store
2 candidates for co-option
Representative from the Friends of Oakley Park

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 1

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors May (unavailable) and Wildsmith (family commitments).

An apology of absence was also received from Cllr Forster (HCC).

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 2

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Fang and Tilley declared an interest for item 13 - Council Lease, due to being members of the Lions (Fleet and Hart branches respectively).

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 3

QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from the public.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 4

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Schofield reported his attendance since the last meeting as follows:

14th May – Attended the Fleet and Church Crookham Society Annual General Meeting.

20th May – Formally opened the tenders for the Harlington refurbishment contract.

21st May – Along with the Executive Officer, met with the Leader and Chief Executive of Hart District Council.

24th May – Along with the Facilities and Open Spaces Manager, met with Hart District Council Rangers for a tour of Basingbourne Park and particularly the SINC's. Some notes of the visit and future advice on the management of the SINC's will be forwarded by the Rangers.

28th May – Attended a Teams meeting with the Executive Officer and the Council’s solicitor regarding the Harlington Lease.

3rd June – Attended a review and update meeting of the Fleet Phoenix Hart Youth Achievement Awards. The event will be held in the Council Chamber at Hart District Council. Sufficient funds have been raised to support the event and all the awards have been sponsored.

5th June – Along with the Executive Officer, attended a Teams Meeting with the Hart District Council’s Chief Executive to progress matters on the Harlington Lease.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 5

HCC/HDC ANNOUNCEMENTS

The following reports were received from Hampshire County Council and Hart District Council.

Cllr Stephen Parker (HCC)

- The sewerage tankers on Hitches Lane have caused traffic issues as they are queuing whilst waiting to be put into service. This is, however, necessary to deal with the sewerage issues in the area.
- The HCC Future Funding Consultation decisions will be delayed until September, due to the elections taking place in July.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 6

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The main and confidential minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held on 8th May 2024 were approved and signed by the Chairman.

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

- Development Control 13th and 28th May 2024
- Policy & Finance 15th May 2024

Members agreed to take item 13 next.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 7

COUNCILLOR CO-OPTION TO FILL A CASUAL VACANCY

There were two applications for co-option on to the Council, to fill one vacancy.

Members received a presentation from each candidate.

The candidates and members of the public left the room whilst voting took place.

Cllr Parker left the meeting at 7.45pm.

RESOLVED

To approve Samantha Neves to be co-opted as a Member of Fleet Town Council.

Samantha Neves signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office form.

Samantha Neves and the representative from the Friends of Oakley Park returned to the meeting room.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 8

**FINANCIAL REPORTING FOR THE YEAR ENDING
31ST MARCH 2024**

- a) Asset Register
Members received a copy of the Asset Register, as at 31st March 2024. Members were advised that the full register is available for inspection.
- b) Financial Statements
Members received the summary of financial statements report for the year ending 31st March 2024. This document provides a summary of the Council's actual (unaudited) year end position, to support the information contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

RESOLVED

- 1) To approve the Asset Register valued at £848,544 at 31st March 2024.
- 2) Members noted the summary of financial statements report for the year ending 31st March 2024.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 9

INTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 2023/24

Members received and discussed the internal audit report 2023/2024, following the year end visit on Wednesday 8th May 2024.

Members noted the proposed actions report, prepared by the Executive Officer in response to the internal audit.

RESOLVED

- 1) To note the Internal Audit report for the year ending 31st March 2024.
- 2) To approve the audit actions report.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 10

**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY
RETURN (AGAR) 2023/24**

- a) BDO Conflict of Interest Form
Members received the BDO conflict of interest form for the external auditor.

It was confirmed that Members do not have any known conflict of interests with BDO.
- b) The Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control for the year Ending 31st March 2024
This report provides the supporting evidence to enable the Council to submit an affirmative response to the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) in the AGAR.

Members performed the review and confirmed that they were satisfied that the Council's system of internal control for each area is effective.

- c) Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24, Internal Audit visit report and the Internal Audit Actions Report

Members reviewed the Annual Internal Audit Report in the AGAR.

d) Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

The Council considered the Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24 by reviewing each section and the response.

The Council confirmed affirmative responses to each of the Annual Governance Statements numbered one to eight. A response of 'not applicable' was recorded for statement number nine, as the Council does not operate any trust funds.

AGAR Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24 was duly approved by the Council.

e) AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24

The Accounting Statements for 2023/24 were considered in detail by the Council.

The Council confirmed that the Accounting Statements are an accurate record of the Council's financial position for the year ending 31st March 2024.

AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 was duly approved by the Council.

The Chairman signed the sections 1 and 2 of the AGAR.

Exercise of Public Rights

The Executive Officer informed the Council that the exercise of public rights, for members of the public to inspect the Council's accounts, will commence on 7th June and end on 18th July 2024.

RESOLVED

- 1) To confirm that the Council and its Members do not have any known conflict of interest with the external auditors BDO.
- 2) To approve the Review of the Effectiveness of the System of Internal Control for the year ending 31st March 2024.
- 3) To note the Annual Internal Audit Report (within the AGAR) and the Internal Audit year end report and to approve the actions report in response to the Internal Audit report.
- 4) To approve the AGAR Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24.
- 5) To approve the AGAR Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 11

EARMARKED RESERVES

Members received the report from the Executive Officer proposing a transfer between reserves to support a future refurbishment project of the skate park at The Views, as recommended by the Policy and Finance Committee.

The proposal has been made possible due to the Council being in a stronger financial position at year end, than originally budgeted.

Members discussed that the skate park and The Views playground are both in need of a major refurbishment. It would be useful to have a discussion with young people as there may be alternative options for the facility, such as 'street' level skating.

It was noted that although the proposed transfer is earmarked for the skate park refurbishment, the Council can reappropriate the funding to another playground project, if there is a more urgent requirement.

RESOLVED

To approve moving £60,000 from the General Fund to the Play Equipment earmarked reserve.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 12

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Members noted receipt of:

- a) The bank reconciliation and a list of payments for April 2024.
- b) A statement from Councillor Robinson confirming that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for April 2024 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 April 2024.
- 2) To accept the statement from Councillor Robinson that the bank reconciliation and list of payments for April 2024 have been verified and signed off.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 13

COUNCIL LEASE

A Fleet Lions Community Store representative gave a short presentation and submitted a report to update the Council on their activities over the past year.

There are several community activities that take place at the store, such as the bra bank and baby bank.

A Member asked if there is a separate financial report for the Community Store. The representative advised there isn't a separate report as they are part of the Fleet Lions. They are updating their systems so this should be available in the future.

RESOLVED

To waive the annual rent for the Fleet Lions Community Store of £500 for 2024/25 financial year. Two Members abstained from the vote.

The two representatives of Fleet Lions Community Store left the meeting at 7.26pm.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 14

THE HARLINGTON UPDATE

Members received a verbal update from the Chairman on the tender process for The Harlington architectural design service.

The Council has received fourteen tender submissions.

The tender evaluation group, as appointed at the last Council meeting, will be assessing the tenders against the set criteria on 6th June. The top three / four firms will be called for an interview.

The Harlington Working Group members can attend the interviews.

The Council will not appoint a contractor to undertake the work until the lease for The Harlington has been signed. The Harlington lease is currently with the respective solicitors to finalise.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 15 COMPLAINTS

The following complaints have been received into the Council Office since the last meeting:

- Two complaints relating to a Facebook post by a Fleet Town Councillor – since the complaints relate to the same subject and are code of conduct matters, the complainants have been asked to redirect their complaint to the Hart District Council Monitoring Officer.
- One complaint about a member of staff – in accordance with the Council's complaints procedure the matter has been dealt with internally. The complainant has stated that they are not expecting any further discussion on the matter.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 16 EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT

Members noted the Executive Officer's report.

Members agreed that the Pop Up Hub, scheduled for 8th June, will move to the Fleet Carnival on 6th July.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 17 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Council is scheduled to be held on Wednesday 3rd July 2024 at 7pm in The Harlington.

CONFIDENTIAL ITEMS – CLOSED SESSION

In accordance with Standing Order 6.a.xx. - to exclude the press and public for all or part of a meeting - a Member of the Council requested that the Council enter into confidential session to discuss a contractual matter.

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.

The Finance and Administration Manager, Administration Support Officer, Samantha Neves and the representative from the Friends of Oakley Park left the meeting at 8:40pm.

FC JUNE 2024 ITEM 18 CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES

Concerns were raised by a Member regarding the potential sharing on social media of an extract from the confidential minutes of the last meeting, regarding Fleet Market.

The Executive Officer and the Chairman will investigate the matter. *Addendum: on investigation the extract on social media was taken from the public minutes from the meeting and, therefore, there has been no breach of confidentiality.*

Due to the brief nature of the discussion, no confidential minutes were required.

The meeting closed at 9:00pm.

Signed.....
Chairman

Date:.....